

EIGHTEEN  
DISCOURSES  
AND  
DISSERTATIONS  
UPON  
Various VERY IMPORTANT  
and INTERESTING  
SUBJECTS.

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BY  
PATRICK DELANY, D.D. *K*  
and Dean of Down in Ireland.

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*I have not kept back thy loving Mercy and  
Truth from the great Congregation.  
Withdraw not thou thy Mercy from me,  
O Lord. PSAL. xl. Ver. 13, 14.*

---

L O N D O N: *2 A 2 D*  
Printed for W. JOHNSTON in Ludgate-Street.  
MDCCLXVI.



THE  
TO  
BY HIS EXCELLENCY  
THE

Earl of  
His Majesty's Secretary in France  
MUSEUM  
BRITAN  
NICIN

My Lord,  
T HIS Collection of  
Christian Discourses is  
most humbly inscribed, not to  
the Power, Grandeur, or earth-  
ly Honours of Lord Hertford,  
but to his distinguished Piety  
and Virtue. Of the Truth  
of this Declaration, my Lord,  
you need no other Proof, than  
that

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TO  
HIS EXCELLENCY  
THE  
Earl of HERTFORD,  
His Majesty's Ambassador in *France*.

MY LORD,  
**T**HIS Collection of  
*Christian* Discourses is  
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the Power, Grandeur, or earth-  
ly Honours of Lord *Hertford*,  
but to his distinguished Piety  
and Virtue. Of the Truth  
of this Declaration, my Lord,  
you need no other Proof, than  
a 2 that

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that it is inscribed by a Man  
dead to the Prospect of all  
earthly Honour to himself,  
and therefore clear of all Sus-  
picion of Flattery to You.  
I would also add, dead to  
all the flattering Sensations of  
Ambition, if I could do it  
with Truth; but, I verily  
think, this is a Passion which  
was never intended to die with  
us in this World, but rather  
to be carried with us into the  
next, there to receive its no-  
blest Directions; and, if this  
be really the Case, I appeal to  
the World, what could be a  
more proper Introduction of it  
into nobler Mansions, than the  
Ambition of this Address to  
one



## DEDICATION

one of the best of earthly Beings, by a Man in the Close of his Eightieth Year, that is, in the Close of his Pilgrimage thither.

My Lord, it is one of the most distinguished Blessings pronounced by a Prince, and a Prophet, and no Flatterer, upon the truly religious Man, whose Delight and Exercise is in the Law of the Lord, that he shall be like a Tree planted by the Water-side, that will bring forth its Fruit in due Season. And where is that Tree, and what Herald could ever truly blazon it, that hath produced such a Number and Choice of noble Fruits, as

one

a 3

adorn

BY DEDICATION

adorn the most Honourable  
Stem of the House of *Symond*,  
and that from the Plantation  
of one righteous and happy  
Parental Pair.

The World will readily be-  
lieve me, when I profess I  
know not any; nor will any  
one deny, that this blessed  
Tree, thus happily flourish-  
ing in its excellent Fruits, both  
of Nature and Culture, hath  
brought them forth in their  
due Season; a Season that  
called loudly for both, to a-  
dorn, to amend, and to bless  
their Country.

My Lord, the Wisdom of  
*Solomon* never produced a no-  
bler Aphorism than this, *The*

48 *Multitude*

# DEDICATION vii

*Multitudes of the World: He*  
*well knew, that the Good only*  
*are Wise; that true Wisdom*  
*dwelleth with Virtue and the*  
*Fear of God; declaring, in*  
*the sixth Chapter of his Pro-*  
*verbs, that God layeth up*  
*Wisdom for the Righteous.*  
*He also knew, that an in-*  
*spired Prophet had long before*  
*pronounced of him that fear-*  
*eth the Lord, His Soul shall*  
*dwell at Ease, and his Seed*  
*shall inherit the Land.*  
 My Lord, these Blessings  
 are now in your full Possession  
 and fair Prospect; your Seed,  
 remarkably blessed in their own  
 Dispositions and Endowments,  
 have



viii DEDICATION

have remarkably blessed the University, and, I doubt not, will, through the Divine Aid and Direction, extend their happy Influence to the Court, the Camp, and the Senate, in due Time; and may they, not confined to one Country, may they, for the Good of the World, and after the Example of their excellent Parents, extend it to remote Regions, where it is most wanted!

And, what happy Effects may thence be derived to their own Country, we may reasonably hope from the blessed Assurance we have, that Ten such would have saved Sodom.

How

## DEDICATION. IX.

How blessed then that Family, in which one single House hath, in its happy progressive Increase, already exceeded that Number! and how glorious a Stay of Hope to that House is that blessed Assurance of the Wise Man, in the fourteenth Chapter of his *Proverbs*, *The Tabernacle of the Upright shall flourish!*

And now, my Lord, as this is the last Work I purpose ever to publish, I take my Leave of You and the World with this cordial Wish to both:

May God's first Blessing upon the first Human Pair, in their Innocence, be continued to You and Your Posterity,  
*Increase*

X DEDICATION.

*Increase and multiply, and re-  
plenish the Earth; and may  
all the Host of Heaven say  
Amen!*

Delville, March 25, 1765,  
being the last Day of the  
Author's Eightieth Year.

READER, whether candid  
or critical, or what justice  
more desires, both; if you are in-  
telligent, and informed as well as  
I wish, you will readily own, that  
a soldier of common sense and com-  
mon honesty, who hath served more  
than fifty years (under able leaders)  
in not the lowest credit and condi-  
tion in the church militant, may  
be naturally as well fitted to admo-  
nish and instruct his youthful sol-  
lowers in the same pursuit, as any  
other veteran, of any other military  
order, with but equal endowments,  
advanced only by the experience  
and



DEDICATION

Increase and multiply, and re-  
plenish the Earth; and may  
~~all the Hosts of Heaven say~~

Amen!

## P R E F A C E.

**R**EADER, whether candid  
or critical, or, what justice  
more desires, both; if you are in-  
telligent, and informed as well as  
I wish, you will readily own, that  
a soldier, of common sense and com-  
mon honesty, who hath served more  
than fifty years (under able leaders)  
in not the lowest credit and condi-  
tion in the church militant, may  
be naturally as well fitted to admo-  
nish and instruct his youthful fol-  
lowers in the same pursuit, as any  
other veteran, of any other military  
order, with but equal endowments,  
advantaged only by the experience  
and

and observation of half as many campaigns.

This single point granted, the editor thinks a sufficient apology for the publication of these discourses, and will, he hopes, be some recommendation of them to the candid and *Christian* world.

What follows may also be some recommendation, but may, at the same time, be some disadvantage to the character both of the work and the author.

He had his education, and began the course of his *Christian* ministry, under Dr. *Peter Browne*, then provost of the college of *Dublin*, and after some time bishop of *Corke*; the most eminent preacher of his time in the kingdom of *Ireland*, and, in the author's judgment, a man of the most masterly and noble elocution, whether in the pulpit, or at the altar, of any man, either of that age or perhaps any other.

How

## P R E F A C E. xiii

How far he profited by that advantage he never presumed to surmise, otherwise than by owning and declaring, upon all occasions, that he fell far short of his master, which might have been a good reason for not naming him on this occasion, but a better prevailed.

His great reason for desiring, that honourable mention should be here made of that excellent provost and prelate, was gratitude to the memory of a man, to whom he thinks the whole nation was eminently indebted for the establishment, if not for the introduction, of true taste both in classical and sacred learning; and, above all, for the example and influence of his most justly admired preaching; and yet more, if possible, for his reading of prayers, the communion service especially, which he never committed to the care of any other, when his health allowed him to minister himself;  
How
and



## P R E F A C E

and which, however excellent in itself, appeared, on all these occasions, more edifying, more affecting, and even heavenly, in his ministration.

He was blessed by God with a voice deep, and clear, and sweet, with such a grace and dignity of aspect, and power of pronounciation, as appeared to give his words new force and energy of meaning; to all which was added such an emphasis, of genuine and unaffected piety, as pierced deep into the hearts of his hearers: of which queen *Anne*, a good judge, gave a noble testimony, when, upon his coming down from the pulpit at St. *James's* chapel, where he had preached before her, she ecchoed his own text, and pronounced audibly to all about her, *Never man spake as this man spake*, declaring, that, if that had not been said of our blessed Saviour, it might have been said of this man.

His

## P R E F A C E.

His eloquence, besides the advantage of his voice and extensive learning, was founded upon its best basis, true religion and solid virtue; both reflecting a diamond lustre in the purity of his mind and manners, which diffused a light of truth and clear conviction from every thing he said.

His distribution of fifty pounds a week to the poor of *Cork*, upon a trying occasion, through the hands of the mayor, gave all the weight he wished to his famous charity-sermon upon the subject of *the widow's mite*.

This weekly sum to the poor he constantly paid by the hands of the mayor (who best knew the condition of the city) as long as the calamity of the public dearth lasted; and, with the last payment, he sent directions to have his plate sold for the next week's contribution; but it pleased God that the calamity lasted no longer, he

## III. PREFACE.

he had enabled his servant to relieve it in the ordinary way; and for his very moderate stock of plate was saved for that time.

I am commissioned by the author to add, that he regards it as a singular felicity of his long life, that God hath enabled him, before the end of it, to publish this testimony of that excellent man's merits, in all the sincerity of a dying man's last words.

It may probably be objected to these discourses, that many of them treat of subjects already well known, and therefore usually termed *trite*.

He owns the charge, but at the same time declines not a fair trial by that test. A well-known ancient and able critic hath left this judicious observation upon record:

*Difficile est proprie communia dicere.*

The author considers this sentence in a meaning different from

Horace,



*Horace*, because this sense is better suited to his purpose.

It is hard to treat a subject generally well known, so as to give it a peculiarity worth our attention; such a peculiarity as may, in some measure, denominate it the author's own property.

It is also the advice of an applauded *English* critic, apparently as a comment on this aphorism:

“Take a known subject, and invent it well;” that is, find something new and useful to observe upon it.

And this is generally deemed the very difficultest province both of the preacher and the pleader, and, doubtless, not without its difficulties to both; yet with less apparent disadvantage to the preacher, that the reasons of the divine laws are inexhaustible as the wisdom of their author, *whose mercy reacheth unto heaven, and his judgments are as*

xviii      P R E F A C E.

the great deep; consequently, in-  
quiries into both, like some ma-  
thematical points admitting many  
gradations of nearer approach, yet  
never fully to be reached; or far  
otherwise, the nearest immeasurably  
distant.

And therefore, though *Barrow*  
has treated some topics amply, and  
sometimes appeareth to have ex-  
hausted them, yet is that no just  
reason why *Tilloson*, his editor, who  
generally grounds himself upon him,  
should not be read upon the same  
topics with pleasure and applause;  
and, perhaps, with more just ap-  
plause, and the character of more  
polite writing, although not clearer  
reasoning, even where *Barrow* hath  
led the way.

The editor of these discourses  
thinks it no very presumptuous re-  
quest, that his author should be  
candidly tried upon the same terms.  
He pretends not to greater, nor  
claims

## P R E F A C E. ix

claims even an equality of abilities with any writer of eminence upon the same subjects; but, as he had the advantage of their lights, with more years and experience to practise after them, with equal advantages of education and application, indeed, of often repeated application, he thinks he hath some title to *Cicero's* last character of *Brutus's* eloquence.

He permits me not to say one word in relation to himself, of *natura admirabilis* or *exquisita doctrina*, because he knows not what it was; yet he hopes the little learning to be found here, I mean to be inferred from the character of his stile, and acquaintance with the Sacred Writings, may be equally useful, although less exquisite; but, as to the *industria singularis* of *Brutus*, the last character of his eloquence, the author presumes to lay some, though perhaps not an equal, claim to it.

For proof of this he hath to urge



the repeated transcripts of the discourses, the second not begun till the first was obliterated with so many corrections, additions, and interlineations, as made it no longer legible to any but the author, and scarcely to him; nor the third transcript begun till the second was in the same condition; and he hopes he may be allowed, at least by the *Christian* reader, an humble presumption of some degree of divine aid and influence upon his constant, earnest, and humble prayer for a blessing upon honest and unwearied industry to the best of purposes.

One thing, he apprehends, must be allowed, as appointed by providence in reward of it, that a small addition of labour often adds greatly to the value of the work in a thousand instances.

But, besides the merit of mere labour, the author hopes for some  
small

small degree of favourable acceptance from the merit of a little variety in the treatment of new subjects; he means subjects and a treatment of them new to himself, the editor also owns to him also, and, he hopes, to many of the readers.

The editor owns, that his engaging in that character hath, as it is not unfrequent in such cases, fixed some prejudice upon him in favour of the author, notwithstanding his long preceding acquaintance, and high esteem of his character and perfect knowledge of the esteem borne of him by the learned world; an esteem sufficiently evidenced by several translations of his works into foreign languages; and one in his majesty's university of *Lunenburg* by the con-rector of that society, which possibly might have given his loyalty the first hint of inscribing his first work to his late majesty, as

he since did another work to the princels dowager of *Wales*, and a third to his present majesty, whom God long bless and preserve.

Old-age is well known to be a great complainer, and it is as well known, that any degree of power, or undue influence, indulged to ill men, is, for the most part, a just ground of grievous complaint.

Foxes, who rob the widow's hen-roost to feed their cubs, have nature and necessity to plead, and are therefore to be considered as pardonable, if not pitiable, beings, compared to those monsters, wallowers in wealth, who, rather than spare a pittance from their own superfluities, even to dignify the issue of their vices, will not scruple to rob the most venerable matron of her property; a property religiously appointed for the support of her own legitimate and honourable off-spring, her best and most unblemished sons.

I have



# P R E F A C E. xxiii

I have lately met, in some of the public papers, great outcries of the impending danger and terrors of popery; and the terror, doubtless, must be great, if the loud reports of some of the worst corruptions of popery, now prevailing, are well founded, viz. that the above-mentioned issue of infamy are not only endowed from the patrimony of the church, but likewise, that men are pressed into that service to intitle them to receive the honour and advantage of such endowments.

These lavishners of wealth, not their own, are men, whose eager avarice God sometimes gratifieth even to superfluity, but at the same time punisheth the criminal excess of it, by giving them over to insatiable cravings after more; abandoned slaves to their lusts, to whom, as *David* finely expresseth it, *God giveth their desire, but sendeth leanness*

xxiv P R E F A C E.

*ness withal into their souls ;* mental  
leanness, not unlike that bodily  
leanness of *Pharaoh's* poor and very  
ill-favoured kine, who cruelly de-  
voured the fat and well-favoured of  
their own species ; and yet, when  
they had eaten them up, were still as  
lank and ill-favoured as they were  
before.

I am commissioned by the author  
to add little more from him, but  
this public declaration of his humble  
and unfeigned thanks to God for  
the leisure he hath allowed him to  
revise and finish these discourses, as  
well as he could ; and that no  
temptations of power, or avocations  
of vanity, have untimely called him  
off from the work ; a work of some  
importance to him, however it may  
be deemed of by the world ; but at  
the same time desires to observe,  
that he blesteth God for what some  
of the same society may partly com-  
plain to him, and not without rea-  
son ;

# P R E F A C E. xv

son; for, if there be any such thing as an eternal law of reason and truth in the world, this most undoubtedly is one, that all men of merit have a right to the rewards of merit in their own country; nor do I know any exception to it, unless it may be in favour of superior merit, and the importing and preferring such will always be a benefaction to any country.

But, to proceed; as old-age is accustomed, and, in some degree, privileged to be querulous, this author thinks he also hath a full right to complain more ways than one; and would, if he thought it were worth while, or would do any good; but alloweth me to mention one only — that he hath lived to see many men distinguished to no advantage in their profession, placed high above others who had a good degree of credit in theirs, before these their now superiors were born; but



## xxvi P R E F A C E.

but he bleſſeth God that he hath long ſince learned, *that promotion cometh neither from the eaſt nor from the weſt* ; that God only is the judge, who putteth down one, and ſetteth up another, as he ſees beſt ;—concluding, in the words of our bleſſed Saviour, *His will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.*

C O N -

xxvii. P R E F A C E (livxx)  
but he bleſſeth God that he hath  
long ſince learned, that promotion  
cometh neither from the left nor from  
the right: that God only is the  
Judge, who ſhall ſettle them one  
ſeats up another, as he ſees beſt,  
concluding in the words of our  
**C O N T E N T S.**

**S E R M O N I.**

**T**HE Duty, true Character, and  
proper Objects of *Chriſtian*  
Zeal.

Epistle to the *Galatians*, Chap. iv.  
Part of Ver. 18.

*But it is good to be zealously affected  
always in a good thing.* Page 1.

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templation of it ſhewn to be of  
the

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tionable Witnesses, from the Na-  
ture and Genius of the Work,  
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the several Verses of the Text,  
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rudiments of the world, and not  
after Christ.*

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Ver. 3. *And there appeared unto them cloven tongues, like as of fire, and it sat upon each of them.*

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# SERMON I.

The Duty, true Character, and proper Objects of Christian Zeal.

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*Galatians, Chap. iv. Part of the  
18th Verse.*

*But it is good to be zealously affected  
always in a good thing.*

**I**T is an imperfection of language, much lamented, that one certain fixed signification cannot be, without great care, permanently and invariably fixed to any sound, or word invented, to express our ideas by; and the reason of this is pretty obvious; there is scarce any idea so simple, but that it admits of many degrees, and may be the foundation  
of

2 *The Duty of Christian Zeal.*

of several relations; and the same idea, in one degree and one relation, is very different from itself, in another relation and degree.---If our ideas are compound, the least addition, or diminution, varieth the composition, and consequently the signification of the word that standeth for it. And considering the various capacities of men, their different degrees of apprehension and understanding; their different affections, and interests, that engage them to conceive their ideas in this or that relation, or degree; to take words either in an imperfect, or enlarged, or limited sense; an uniform, fixed signification in the minds and mouths of men of all characters and conditions, seemeth utterly impossible; and some variation, especially in length of time, almost unavoidable.

Indeed the labours of learned men, in compiling of lexicons, for ascertaining

*The Duty of Christian Zeal.* 3

taining the signification of words, hath been of great use to remedy this imperfection; and these, together with early and accurate translations, and the writings of such as have been careful in giving clear and accurate definitions of those things they have treated upon, would, if heedfully attended to, upon the principles of true criticism, be of the last importance, for preventing many disputes and difficulties, which must otherwise unavoidably arise upon this head. — From hence it is, that, as words of antient use are more liable to mistake and misconstruction, yet from the advantages above-mentioned, (especially if they be of learned languages) they are, for the most part, more capable of being corrected, and established in their primitive signification, than those of a newer date. — I believe it will be allowed me, that few words have been more abused, or less understood,



#### 4 *The Duty of Christian Zeal.*

stood, than Zeal; and yet, if we attend to *Aristotle's* definition of the original Greek word Ζῆλος, we shall find it clearly to signify *Emulation*; a very noble and generous principle: a principle that employeth us in laudable pursuits, and maketh us jealous, and uneasy, to be exceeded by others, in the attainment of them. Now, because there is also a jealousy, and uneasiness, at the superiority of others, that attendeth envy; therefore Ζῆλος hath sometimes been taken for *Envy*; although, strictly and properly speaking, it signifieth *Emulation*. And, when it is applied to religion, it may be defined a pious emulation that engages us in a serious and earnest concern for the interests of religion, and makes us uneasy to be exceeded by others, either in our affection, or endeavours, for the service and honour of God. And, forasmuch as Zeal is usually attended with a good deal of

*The Duty of Christian Zeal.* 5

of vehemence, and calls many passions to its assistance, in the pursuit of its aim; therefore, it hath often been taken for the passions that attend it.—If the interests it is concerned for be in a happy flourishing condition, or in a fair prospect of being so; then it is *joy*, or *hope*: if otherwise, *sorrow* and *anguish*, and a *righteous indignation* against the authors of the evil.—If they call for its assistance or protection, it is *diligence* and *courage*, and a *steady resolution*.—All this is *Zeal*, under the guidance of reason, and a conscience rightly informed; but, if error and violence be its principles of action, then, it is *fury*, and *outrage*, and *extravagance*.

Forasmuch, then, as a truly rational and religious Zeal is a most exalted and excellent virtue, is a righteous and heavenly disposition, uniting all the powers of the soul and body, in the pursuit of the *one thing*

## 6 *The Duty of Christian Zeal.*

*necessary*; but, at the same time, an ignorant and blind Zeal is a most dangerous and pernicious principle, leading into destructive errors, and liable to be abused to the worst purposes; as may be seen from the examples of the *Anabaptists* in *Germany*; and the late, not to say the present, *Entbusiasts* here; and the *Pa-pists* over the whole world: therefore the business of this discourse shall be to reduce this principle to its proper regulations, and shew you under what limitations it is a virtue, and how it becometh a vice.

The limitations under which Zeal is a most excellent virtue, are these; that it be *according to knowledge*; that it be *always*; and that it be *in a good thing*.

First, it is required of Zeal, that it be *according to knowledge*; this is implied in that passage of St. *Paul's* epistle to the *Romans*, where, speaking of *Israel*, he beareth them record,



*The Duty of Christian Zeal.* 7

cord, that *they had a Zeal of God, but not according to knowledge*: And, indeed, this is no more than is required in the exercise of every other virtue, that we be rightly informed; in the reason and justice of our conduct: without this, Zeal would degenerate into a blind obstinacy, drawing into most dangerous and pernicious consequences.\*

To make Zeal, then, a rational, as well as a religious duty, we ought to inquire and examine into the grounds of our religion; the reasons both of our belief and practice; and when once we have attained a reasonable satisfaction of the truth, which every man living may, that will examine into it calmly and candidly;

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\* Such was the perverseness of the *Jews*, in rejecting our blessed Saviour Christ, altho' he carried, with him, the clearest marks and evidences of the true *Messiah*: and such the obstinacy of the *Dissenters*, at this day, in their separation, altho' they can assign no one sinful term of communion, on our part, without which, they cannot but know, that breaking the peace and unity of the church is a sin that must be severely accounted for.

## 8 *The Duty of Christian Zeal.*

candidly; humbly invoking the divine aid and guidance, in our inquiries; then, a steady and earnest adherence to it, and a serious concern for all its interests, is Zeal; but, without it, it is obstinacy, and pride, and prejudice.

Now, this blind obstinacy seems to proceed from a fallacious subtlety of nature; it being observable, that, when men are unreasonably attached to any opinion, they are obliged to support it, by supplying, from passion, obstinacy, or enthusiasm, whatever is wanting to them, in point of reason and proof.

And hence it is, that the opinions and pretensions of blind Zeal are, for the most part, repugnant to common sense; such is transubstantiation among the *Papists*, which they are generally more bigotted to than almost any article of the Christian faith! altho' it be the doctrine, of all others, most contrary to the reason.

son of mankind, and most inconsistent with the goodness of God: who could never be conceived that gracious and merciful Lord, so condescending to the capacities of his creatures, if he obliged them to believe, in direct contradiction to those abilities he himself endowed them with: and to assent to propositions as truths, which they were, at the same time, under a necessity of conceiving to be absurd and impossible.—And such is the perverseness of the *Calvinists*, for absolute predestination, in opposition to free will; altho' they cannot but see, that such a doctrine doth, by clearest consequence, make God the sole author of sin: under all the aggravating circumstances of tyranny, and cruelty, that can be imagined, inflicting the severest penalties upon the transgression of laws, which he, at the same time, renders impossible to be obeyed. And, lastly, such are the  
the



30 *The Duty of Christian Zeal.*

the bold pretensions of our present Methodists to the inspirations of the divine spirit, without any one proof of his power, unless doing what no power upon earth can authorise may be deemed a proof.—Despising institutions confessedly apostolical, and truly Christian! and vilifying characters justly venerable.—And such will always be the case, when wild ignorance is permitted to insult sober science; and tumultuous irregularity and extravagance to trample order and decency, and legal establishments, under foot.

And, therefore, it is highly incumbent upon all men, both with regard to their own conscience, and the quiet of the community, to be well informed of those things they contend for; to be cautious of founding their religious contests and dissensions in their own ignorance and perverseness, vanity, or vain-glory. Since not only their own salvation,  
and

*The Duty of Christian Zeal.* II

and the peace of society; but, likewise, the interest of true religion, for which they seem to be so solicitous, is greatly concerned in so doing.

The next condition of a truly religious Zeal is, that it should be *always*—that is, that it be one, even, uniform tenor of action; not by fits and starts;—Constancy and uniformity being the effect of a settled judgment and thorough conviction: whereas a giddy, desultory, temporary Zeal is the effect of chance, or humour, or interest.—The one is a vital principle, it is the warmth of health, and a good habit; the other is the heat of a fever, or an excess; that scorches and burns for a time, and then leaves the unhappy patient cold and dispirited.—And I appeal to every calm and candid Christian, whether this be not the case of those men who, in the midst of their enthusiastic and blasphemous

12 *The Duty of Christian Zeal.*

phemous rants, complain of spiritual desertions and deadness.—The intemperate Zeal is boisterous, and violent, and unruly!—The temperate is calm, and sedate, and resolute.—These are the characteristics, of the true and false Zeal; and by these we may judge, whether our Zeal be the effect of reason and conscience, or whether it be only the offspring of ambition, enthusiasm, or avarice.—In the first case it is permanent and uniform; in the last it is temporary, and vanishes with the occasion of it.—The one shineth even and regular, like the lights of heaven; the other, like a vapour of the earth casually kindled, flasheth for a moment, and then disappeareth in smoke and silence.—The true Zeal, as it is the effect of true religion, so it is attended with all the virtues and graces that adorn our Christian profession: it is meek and humble; it is charitable  
and



and compassionate; it is steadfast and resolved; immoveable to all the prospects of fear, or favour! It is, to all the temptations of this world, as a rock in the midst of the sea: neither the roughest storms of adversity, nor the highest tides of honour and advancement, can shake it from its firm basis; it is steady and invariable, as the being and perfections of that God, to whose service it is devoted.

Thirdly, the last limitation of Zeal is, that it be *in a good thing*; — that is, that it be employed upon such things as are of most value, and greatest consequence to mankind: and, if this character does not limit and confine it to the concerns of religion, yet doth it direct it principally to them. — The interests of religion that claim it most are, first, the honour of God; that is, that awful reverence of the divine Being and attributes, which is expressed in prayers

14 *The Duty of Christian Zeal.*

prayers and praises; in acknowledging our humble dependence and sincere gratitude for his infinite blessings and benefits! in thinking and speaking with the most profound veneration of his most holy name and nature!

And, forasmuch as all religion is founded in the fear and honour of God, therefore it is a direct contradiction to religious Zeal to think or speak lightly or profanely of his being, providence, or dispensations; and particularly of his holy will revealed to us in the Scriptures.

It is a direct contradiction to religious Zeal, knowingly, or deliberately, to disobey or despise the commandments of God, which are at once the rules of our obedience, and the conditions both of our temporal and eternal happiness; particularly that command, upon which the observance of all the rest so mainly dependeth, the command of  
keeping

*The Duty of Christian Zeal.* 15

keeping the Sabbath holy; a command most wantonly insulted, and trampled under foot in this realm, by almost all orders and degrees of men among us, but especially those of higher condition; a command upon which the felicity of the whole creation, the very being of true religion and virtue, the ease of all the wants and distresses of humanity, and the relief of the whole labouring world so plainly depend, as clearly evince it the appointment of infinite wisdom, benignity, and mercy.

The next object of religious Zeal are the mysteries of religion; the holy and undivided Trinity; the creation and fall of our first parents! the incarnation of our Lord Jesus Christ! the redemption of the world! the resurrection of the body! and everlasting rewards and punishments! —Of these I shall say no more at present but this, that a profound veneration of those great and sacred truths



16 *The Duty of Christian Zeal.*

truths is of infinite importance to fix the humility of faith in the human heart, and repress the fatal pride of self-sufficiency.

That there should be distinct characters and modes of subsistence in the divine nature, utterly inexplicable to such short-sighted creatures as we are, hath surely nothing strange or unreasonable in it.—And therefore to infer any absurdity and inconsistency in them, because they are inexplicable, is the effect of the greatest folly and presumption.

Also to dispute and deny the various dispensations of providence, because *the judgments of God are unsearchable, and his ways past finding out*, arraigns us of equal vanity and ignorance. We see it established in nature, that creatures of an inferior species are incapable of searching into the nature, or accounting for the conduct of those of a superior order; and yet it would be infinitely

nitely less presumptuous in a worm or a fly to quarrel with the institutions of government, or the principles of science, because they are utterly incapable of comprehending them, than it would be in us to hesitate upon the least article of faith, because we are not able clearly to explain and account for the mystery contained in it; forasmuch as there is an infinitely greater distance betwixt the Almighty and us, than there can be between the wisest man in the world and the meanest reptile!—And therefore all these things ought to be treated of with an humble and awful reverence! as the appointments of infinite and unsearchable wisdom!—as truths far above our present capacities,—and *knowledge too wonderful for us!* perhaps too, in its full extent, utterly inconsistent with our condition in this world.

But, farther, another object of religious Zeal is the peace, and unity,  
C and

18 *The Duty of Christian Zeal.*

and preservation of that church, in whose communion we expect the salvation of our souls; together with all those decent and venerable rites which are so happily calculated for peace and piety, are so expressive of the *beauty of holiness*, and so worthy of the God of harmony and order.

And the reason of this is evident, because these are the means by which the truths of religion are inculcated in us, and the practice of it kept up in the world; and therefore they who pretend to have a sincere regard for the end, that is, for true religion, without a sufficient Zeal for the means, are either greatly deluded themselves, or would strangely delude others; inasmuch as it is evident, that without these means religion can neither be propagated nor supported in the world.

And one of the surest tests of true Zeal for the necessary means of true religion



*The Duty of Christian Zeal.* 19

religion is a becoming regard for the priesthood; and this we can never fail in, if we consider them in their true character, *as ministers of Christ, and stewards of the mysteries of God!* for, if we have a sincere awe of the Supreme Being, it will be impossible for us not to pay a good degree of reverence to the sacred character of those men who are commissioned by him to initiate into his church; to preach his laws; and to administer his sacraments.

Besides this, if we consider the Christian priesthood barely as so many guardians of virtue, as so many reformers, whose lives are employed in correcting the vices and errors of the world, we cannot avoid regarding them as the greatest public benefactors to mankind.

That mankind abound with evil dispositions; that those dispositions stand in the utmost need of correction and amendment; that those

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who

20 *The Duty of Christian Zeal.*

who employ themselves to that end are employed for the peace of society and the good of mankind; are all propositions that are self-evident, and yet, as clear as they are, I am sensible with how much disadvantage they fall from the mouth of one who is himself interested in the truth of them. Nevertheless, as invidious as it may be, I cannot forbear adding that however the corruptions of some men may engage them to revile that order, and however too many of that order may expose themselves to reviling (for, how few soever they may be, they are still too many) yet he must be very ignorant and unthinking to a great degree, who doth not see how much the present set of Christian priests in the established churches of these kingdoms do in the main merit of mankind!—that they deserve the utmost favour and encouragement of every well instituted government,

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vernment, *Heathen, Jewish, or Mahometan*, as well as *Christian*; and that, if for no other reason, yet merely for their reading lectures of true virtue and true religion to the people once a week.

Another object of a wise and religious Zeal, is the peace and well-being of the society we live in, and the support of that government, by which we are protected in the full and free enjoyment of all our religious and civil rights.

And when we consider that not only all the blessings we enjoy as men, but likewise all the advantages of a rational and true faith, wherewith we of this church are eminently blessed, in opposition to blind bigotry and gross Popish corruption, depend mainly and principally (under God) upon the continuance of that happy establishment under which the good providence of God hath placed us;—and if, besides all



22 *The Duty of Christian Zeal.*

the natural engagements to duty and allegiance to our rightful and lawful sovereign King *George*, which the enjoyment of so many invaluable advantages derives upon us, we reflect upon the many religious engagements we are under to the same purpose, from the express commands of God, enforced by solemn and repeated oaths; I say, if we consider this with any degree of calm and rational reflection, we shall quickly conclude that the peace and preservation of his Majesty's government, and the continuance of it in the Protestant line of his descendants, must be among the truest objects of a wise and a religious Zeal to every man that is sincerely concerned for the liberties of his country, and the purity of the Christian faith: And God in his goodness be praised that he hath signally diffused this spirit throughout these nations, as clearly appeared in their late time of trial.

And

*The Duty of Christian Zeal.* . 23

And thus I have endeavoured to lay before you the several limitations of a wise and a religious Zeal, which make it a most exalted and excellent virtue.

First, that it be *according to knowledge*; that is, that we be well informed in the truth and importance of what we contend for, in opposition to that blind Zeal that leads into most destructive and pernicious errors.

Secondly, that it be *always*, that is, that it be one, even, uniform tenor of action; the result of consideration, and a settled conviction.—And,

Thirdly, that it be *in a good thing*, that is, that it be always employed upon something that is of importance to mankind; such are the fear and honour of God; the dispensations of his providence; the mysteries of — faith; and the doctrine, discipline, and preservation of his holy church:—The reverence of those

24 *The Duty of Christian Zeal.*

that bear the sacred character of his ministers, and the continuance of that happy establishment under which we enjoy the greatest blessings that can be derived to us, either as men or Christians.

But here it may be asked how all this is consistent with that *moderation* so much recommended, and which the apostle commands us *to make known unto all men*?—To this I answer, that I cannot, without some concern, reflect upon the ignorance or perverseness of some people, in recommending this duty of moderation to the world as opposed to Zeal, and intended by the apostle to temper and abate the warmth of our concern for the interests of religion: whereas in truth it hath no more relation to Zeal, than it hath to chastity or charity; to murder or rebellion, or to any other vice or virtue, the most remote that can be imagined.—The passage is in the ivth chapter



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chapter of St. Paul's epistle to the *Philippians*, the 4th and 5th verses : *Rejoice in the Lord alway, and again I say, Rejoice.—Let your moderation be known unto all men ; the Lord is at hand.*—Now the *moderation* here recommended is plainly (*ἐπιείκεια*) gentleness and patience under their afflictions ; and the reason of it is annexed, *the Lord is at hand* ;—that is, God, who hath better things in store for you, will soon destroy your enemies that persecute you, and deliver you from all your calamities.—And so the best interpreters explain the place.—And how this should come to be recommended and urged, in opposition to religious Zeal, is an instance of error or perverseness, not easy to be accounted for otherwise, than from the coldness of mankind in their concerns of highest importance.—And indeed, if ever there was an an infidel and degenerate age, it is, without question, that wherein we live ;—and, *because*

26 *The Duty of Christian Zeal.*

*cause iniquity doth abound, therefore the love of many waxeth cold;—it is for this reason, and for this only, that the doctrine of religious Zeal can possibly sound strange in the ears of Christians!—Some of them, it is too much to be feared, Christians only in name—that draw near to God with their lips, and worship him with their mouths; but their hearts are far from him;—although, God be praised, this charge reacheth few or none of this audience.*

But here still it may be objected, that there is a warmth and vehemence allowed in this account of Zeal, that seems not altogether so consistent with that moderation, meekness, and gentleness every-where recommended to us in the New Testament, and in the example of Christ and his apostles.

To this I answer, that Zeal is perfectly consistent with the whole train of Christian virtues, and is never

*The Duty of Christian Zeal.* 27

ver rightly exercised, but when it is exerted in concert with them all. —The Christian virtues are no contradictions to one another;—mercy is not repugnant to justice, nor meekness to fortitude, nor moderation to Zeal.—It will be allowed that our *blessed Saviour* was meek and lowly, and yet his Zeal for the honour of God carried him so far as to whip out the buyers and sellers from the temple.—It will be allowed that *St. Paul* had a truly Christian spirit, and yet he rebukes *Elymas the Sorcerer* in words that would now scarcely be thought allowable in any of his successors upon any occasion whatsoever.—And indeed the objection seems to imply, that there is no such thing as a religious use of our passions!—That there is no such thing as a pious anger, as a godly sorrow for sin, or a holy indignation against those that provoke and blaspheme God!—little considering



28 *The Duty of Christian Zeal.*

ing that this would be to confine our passions to their meanest objects, and their lowest use!—whereas the real truth is, that the concerns of this world are not worthy our most serious resentments, and that they are the interests of religion alone that challenge our warmest affections and our most earnest concern!—affairs of infinite and eternal importance being alone worthy the intense regards of rational and immortal souls; and, whilst our Zeal is confined within the limitations already assigned, there is no fear of excess: God knows the danger is in the defect.

However, to avoid all possibility of error and mistake upon this head, let me again repeat what I before inculcated, that true Zeal must be exercised in concert with all the other Christian virtues; that we must by no means *do evil, that good may come.*  
—That we must not transgress one of  
God's

*The Duty of Christian Zeal.* 26

God's laws to preserve his whole religion ; and therefore, when we meet with a proper object upon which to employ our Zeal, we ought always to consider what other duties we are obliged to at the same time, that we may be careful not to transgress these in our pursuit.—We know that truth and justice, and Christian charity, purity and peace, are duties of constant and perpetual obligation ; and that no pretext of pious intentions or good ends can ever free us from them ; therefore our Zeal must be charitable and just, truly Christian and benevolent, peaceable and pure.—And, when it is thus directed and informed, then it becomes worthy of God ;—and the only improvement it is then capable of, is, a steady and inviolable perseverance ! that no temptations or afflictions, that no prospects of fear or favour, be able to shake us in it, or seduce us from it ;—that we may be *steadfast, immoveable,*  
*always*

30 *The Duty of Christian Zeal.*

*always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as we know that our labour is not in vain in the Lord.*

I shall make but one short inference from what has been said, and that is, that Princes are eminently obliged, above all other mortals, to the duty of a religious Zeal for the honour of God, first,—because they owe more gratitude to God for their exaltation above the rest of mankind;—secondly, because they are God's substitutes and vicegerents here on earth;—this is their peculiar glory, and therefore they are indispensably obliged to reverence him *by whom they reign, the King of Kings.* And if at any time they find themselves less honoured by any of their people (in any instance) than they deserve (which hath often been the case of the best Princes upon earth) let them lay their hands upon their hearts and ask their own consciences, whether they steadily honour God as they ought;  
always



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always remembering that solemn declaration of the Almighty, *Them that honour me I will honour, saith the Lord.*

In the last place, Princes should remember, that, as they are the fathers of their country, God is their father, and eminently intitled to all, more than all, that honour and veneration at their hands, which they expect at the hands of their people: — *A son honoureth his father, and a servant his master; if then I be a father, where is mine honour? And, if I be a master, where is my fear, saith the Lord of Hosts?*—Therefore give unto the Lord the glory due unto his name, and worship him in the beauty of holiness.

S E R-

## SERMONS II. III.

The Doctrine of the true Church  
The Church of all nations  
Original and a religious Com-  
munion of it, there to be of  
the last importance to every one

By the Reverend and Learned  
Minister of the Gospel, Dr. John  
Calvin.

A Sermon preached at the  
Church of St. Martin, the 14th of  
November, 1604, by the  
Reverend and Learned Minister  
of the Gospel, Dr. John Calvin.

Continued in the same words as the  
first Sermon of the same learned  
man, and likewise by the same

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## SERMONS II. III.

The Doctrine of the ever blessed Trinity cleared of all reasonable Objections, and a religious Contemplation of it shewn to be of the last Importance to Piety and Virtue.

Being the Substance of two Sermons preached in *Trinity College, Dublin.*

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i Epistle of St. *John* Ch. v. Ver. 7.

*For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost; and these three are one.*

**F**ORasmuch as these words are by the labours of many learned men; and likewise by the annexed  
D differ-



disertation, cleared of all cavils of *Arians* and *Socinians*, and sufficiently evidenced to be genuine; therefore, taking the authority of them to be well established, as certainly it is, I shall proceed from them to assert the doctrine of the ever blessed Trinity, in the following manner:

First, I shall endeavour to shew that a Trinity of persons in the unity of the Godhead is sufficiently founded upon the authority of the sacred Scriptures.

Secondly, that this doctrine is neither absurd, nor contradictory; nor any way disagreeable to reason.—

And,

Thirdly, I shall examine what influence the belief of it ought to have upon our lives.

First, then, I am to shew that a Trinity of persons in the Godhead is sufficiently founded upon the authority of the sacred Scriptures; and, although there needs no other proof of

of this besides the text before us, yet, to shew you that the tenor of the New Testament is agreeable to this text, I shall desire to observe, in the first place, that the distinction of the three persons in the Godhead is very evident from the history of our blessed Saviour's baptism, where the Son is the person baptised, the Father is distinguished by a voice from heaven, and the Holy Ghost by descending and resting upon the Son like a dove.

And that the voice from heaven was from God the Father appears not only from the form of the words (for who else could say with any propriety, This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased?) but likewise from St. Peter's testimony concerning the same voice, pronounced, a second time, at our blessed Saviour's transfiguration on the mount, which he expressly tells us, in his 2d epistle chap. i. ver. 17, came from

God the Father.—For, saith the apostle, *he received from God the Father honour and glory, when there came such a voice to him from the excellent glory.—This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.* A

Again, this distinction of persons in the unity of the Godhead is evident from our blessed Saviour's institution of baptism, in the xxviii<sup>th</sup> chapter of St. Matthew, and the xvi<sup>th</sup> of St. Mark, *Go ye therefore, and teach all nations; baptising them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost. He that believeth, and is baptised, shall be saved; but he that believeth not, shall be damned.*—Here the three persons are sufficiently distinguished; and the making each of the other two equally the object of our faith and obedience with God the Father, by being equally initiated into the Christian religion, in the name of each, and equally entering into con-



the *Trinity cleared* 32  
 venant with each, as a condition  
 necessary to, our eternal salvation,  
 necessarily infers each of them to be  
 equally the true God.

Again, that both the Son and the  
 Holy Ghost are each of them truly  
 and properly God, in the most emi-  
 nent sense of the word, appears from  
 the apostle's swearing by Christ, and  
 (which is the same thing) calling the  
 Holy Ghost to witness. — For an oath  
 is a religious act, whereby we in-  
 voke the person we swear by, as a  
 witness and rewarder of veracity,  
 and an avenger of falsehood; and  
 such an invocation is a plain ac-  
 knowledgment of omniscience, om-  
 nipresence, and omnipotence in the  
 person invoked. — Of omnipresence,  
 because he must be able to hear at  
 all times, and in all places, all those  
 that call upon him. — He must also  
 be of infinite power, to reward and  
 punish; and of infinite wisdom, to  
 direct that power; and consequently,

when the apostle swears by Christ, and calls the Holy Ghost to witness, he plainly acknowledgeth each of them to be every-where present, all-knowing, and almighty God.

But further, that *Jesus* is God, to omit other infinite testimonies to this purpose, appears, incontestably, from the ixth chapter of St. Paul's epistle to the *Romans*, at the 5th verse, where he said to be *over all, God blessed for evermore!* that is, he is called God in that very style which the *Jews* were wont to use towards the Supreme God, upon the most solemn occasions.—And, after this, can any one of common candour have the least doubt of his being truly and properly God?

And, as to the Holy Ghost, his Divinity also appears, clearly and incontestably, from the vth chapter of the *Acts* of the holy apostles, 1st, 3d and 4th verses—where lying to the Holy Ghost is expressly said to be

be lying to God.—But Peter said,  
*Ananias! why hath Satan filled thine  
 heart to lye unto the Holy Ghost? Thou  
 hast not lyed unto men, but unto God;*  
 —that is, thou hast lyed unto that  
 being who is the only searcher of  
 hearts.

And whereas in many parts of the  
 New Testament, particularly the  
 xiith chapter of St. Paul's 1st epistle  
 to the *Corinthians*, several personal  
 actions are clearly and expressly as-  
 cribed to the holy Spirit:—It is scarce  
 to be conceived, how any rational  
 creature, it is impossible to ima-  
 gine, how any creature of common  
 candour, not overlet by vanity, could  
 at once be so absurd, and so perverse,  
 as to deny him to be truly and pro-  
 perly a person.

Whereas, therefore, it appears  
 clearly and incontestably that *Christ*  
 is God, and the Holy Ghost God;  
 and yet the scriptures every where  
 assert, that there is but one God; it  
 evidently



evidently follows; that both the Son and the Holy Ghost must be one with the Father in the Godhead.

We may add to this, that our blessed Saviour expressly affirms, in the xth chapter of St. *John*, and 30th verse, that the Father and He are one; and the same reason that holds for the union of two persons in the Godhead, holds equally for the union of all the three.—And it is well known that *Christ*, who was incarnate by the Holy Ghost, is pronounced by God the Father *my beloved Son*; clearly implying the union of the Father and the blessed Spirit in the Godhead.—The apostle also evidently confirms the same thing in the xth chapter of his 1st epistle to the *Corinthians*, the 4th, 5th, and 6th verses: *Now there are diversities of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are differences of administrations, but the same Lord; and there are diversities of operations, but*

## *the Trinity cleared.*

41

*It is the same God which worketh all in all.* That is, however the different offices, and gifts, and operations of the several persons of the blessed Trinity (the Spirit, the Son, and the Father) may be distinguished, yet it is *the same God which worketh all in all.*—It is the same one God, from whom all these gifts, offices, and operations flow.—And this is evident, because none but God could, or can be, the author of any one of all those gifts, operations, and powers.

And surely these reasons and these authorities were enough, although there had been no other (as in truth there are many\*) to establish the doctrine of the Trinity in the Christian church from its first foundation; and accordingly we do find

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\* See this doctrine fully and amply cleared and demonstrated, and all objections to it as fully and clearly confuted, by the Rev. Mr. William Jones, in his little but most excellent treatise of the *Catholic Doctrine*, &c.

find it asserted by the earliest fathers, before the birth either of *Arianism* or *Arius*.

And thus having shewn you that a Trinity of persons in the unity of the Godhead is sufficiently founded in the Scriptures,—I proceed, in the next place, to shew, that this doctrine is neither absurd, nor contradictory, nor any way disagreeable to reason.

And this will appear, if we consider that it is by no means absurd, nor contradictory, that the same thing should, in different respects, be one and many; but is true in a thousand instances.—Indeed, the same thing cannot be one and many in the same respect; but, why it should not be one and many in different respects, I am sure no reason can be assigned, since such propositions are no way contrary, or inconsistent, the one with the other: forasmuch as they are not, as the  
*Logicians*



*Logicians* express it, *ad idem*; that is, the opposition doth not fall upon the same terms: and therefore, if we affirmed that the divine nature were one in essence, and many in essence, such affirmations would be contrary and inconsistent, because we should affirm one and many of the same thing in the same respect; but to affirm that the divine nature, which is one in essence, may be various in personality, that is, may have several persons in it, carries no sort of opposition or inconsistency in it; neither is it more contradictory than to affirm that the human nature, which is one, may have many persons in it, although after a manner wholly different; or that a bodily substance, in itself one and uniform, is various in its dimensions; or a tree, which is in itself one, is manifold in its branches, each of which is evidently consubstantial to the trunk, and to one another. —

That

That this doctrine therefore is not in any wise either absurd, or contradictory, is evident beyond all possibility of doubt.

That it is also no way disagreeable to reason I hope to evince, in the progress of this discourse.—And, in the first place, I desire to ask how or why it should be deemed more contrary to reason, that the same nature should have and constitute different persons, than that natures altogether different, should constitute one and the same person?—And perhaps the latter truth would, of the two, be much the more difficult to be either conceived or credited, if we did not find, in our own composition, two principles perfectly different, *viz.* a soul and a body; and in that body one principle of vegetation, and another of sense, entirely distinct; together with a friendly union of contrary elements (hot and cold, moist and dry.)—

How

How then is it in any wise more absurd, or contrary to reason, that the nature of God should have three distinct persons in it, than that the person of every man living should have three natures perfectly distinct in it, and one part of his composition (to wit, his body) made up, not only of distinct natures, but of contrary principles?—How intolerable then is that impious temerity of those dogmatic infidels, who, although they know their own nature to be made up of principles opposite and contrary, and acknowledge the divine nature to be infinite and incomprehensible, yet have the hardness to arraign the great truths which God himself hath declared concerning it, for no other reason but because it exceeds their capacity and comprehension? Whereas, if they think or reflect at all, they cannot but see that it is a law established in nature, that beings of an inferior



inferior order cannot conceive or comprehend the perfections of those of a superior; and I do in my conscience believe, that, if the holy Scriptures had revealed nothing to us concerning the nature of God, but what every man could clearly comprehend, that very conduct would have given rise to the most dangerous, sceptical, and philosophical infidelity that ever yet infested the world. — All right reasoning upon his nature demonstrates him to be infinite in power, in knowledge, in existence, eternal, unoriginated, and unending. — We can well conceive the existence, the necessary existence, of such a being; but can the nature of such a being be clearly comprehended by us? — Perhaps it would be less absurd to suppose a brute quarrelling with institutions of government, or arraigning the principles of science, than to behold a poor, finite, groveling, mortal canvassing

carvassing the nature and attributes of that High and Mighty one, that inhabiteth eternity, and pronouncing upon the absurdity and inconsistency of every thing that he cannot readily conceive and thoroughly comprehend, at the same time that this dupe of vanity does not pretend to explain or account for the least principle or experiment of electricity, and many other phenomena in nature, daily exhibited to all his senses. — But to proceed, <sup>and in no</sup> That the possibility of several persons in the unity of the divine nature may yet be more clearly conceived, let us consider in what our idea of the sameness or identity of rational beings consists. — Is it not in consciousness, in the sameness of will, and understanding, and affections? — For example — can any man living say how he knows himself to be the same to-day that he was yesterday, or seven years ago, otherwise than

than from a consciousness of his own thoughts and actions, and whole conduct of his mind and manners? Doubtless, he cannot.—Nor is it possible to assign or conceive any criterion, or invariable character, of the identity or sameness of rational beings, besides this.—Let us then suppose three men to be perfectly conscious of each other's thoughts, and to agree perfectly in one will and one understanding—that is, to have exactly the same thoughts and inclinations, and aversions and purposes of life; should we not immediately conclude that these men were actuated by one soul,—that is, that in their soul they were one, although in their bodies and subsistence many?—We own, indeed, that in the natural state of things this is impossible, because the human mind is of a limited capacity, and consequently is confined in its operations, and can actuate only the organs and powers



powers of one person at one time;—but this we conceive impossible, in man, is not only possible, but even necessary, in Almighty God.—For, whereas the divine mind is infinite, omnipresent, omniscient, and omnipotent, it is evident it may not only equally actuate and inform, but also, for aught we know, constitute several persons at the same time.—

And that the unity of God the Father and God the Son ariseth from the unity of their thoughts and purposes, is evident from the xviith chapter of St. *John's* gospel and 22d verse, compared with the ivth chapter of *Acts* and 32d verse.—In the first of these *Christ* prays the Father for his church, *that they may be one*, (saith he) *as we are one*:—Now we are informed, *Acts* chap. iv. ver. 32, that the church, after our blessed Saviour's resurrection, was in perfect union, and therefore *was one*;—and how was it one?—The text plainly

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tells us, that *the multitude of them that believed, were of one heart, and one soul.* Consequently they were, as far as we can comprehend, one, as *Christ* and the Father are one.—Whereas therefore, it is clearly revealed in the Scriptures, that there are three in heaven, to whom divine properties and perfections are every where ascribed throughout those sacred Writings; and yet God is there constantly affirmed to be but one; it is evident that these three persons must be actuated and informed by the same one infinite mind; consequently that there is but one divine nature under the distinction of three persons.—What, though we do not clearly know, and cannot thoroughly explain, these distinctions, doth it follow that they are not so distinguished, and yet at the same time so united?—We all know that the parts of bodies which are every day before our eyes, are certainly

tainly and indisputably united to one another.—Hath any philosopher ever yet clearly explained the manner and the nature of that union?—And yet hath any one ever been so weak and unphilosophical as to deny, for that reason, that they were united?—although, at the same time indubitably distinguished from one another.—For shame then, when we are so dark and short-sighted, with regard to present, gross, sensible objects, let us not pretend to pronounce with so much blind arrogance, with so much senseless presumption, upon such objects as are infinitely remote and refined,—are infinitely above us!—Especially, at the same time that we ourselves acknowledge them to be incomprehensible; and when it is so evident in itself, that a nature which is infinite and uncreated, cannot be fully conceived by a finite subordinate being;—and when it is a law esta-

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blished in nature, that no inferior being can comprehend the nature of beings of an higher order.—And, to speak in the style of the prophet, *is not God in the height of heaven?—who hath measured the waters in the hollow of his hand, and meted out of the heavens with a span;—and comprehended the dust of the earth in a measure, and weighed the mountains in scales, and the hills in a balance.—Have you not known?—Have you not heard? Hath it not been told you from the beginning?—It is he that sitteth upon the circle of the earth, and the inhabitants thereof are as grasshoppers.*

And thus having shewn, I hope to your satisfaction, that this doctrine of the *blessed Trinity* is neither absurd, nor contradictory, nor in any wise disagreeable to reason, but in truth perfectly consistent with it, although not explicable by it:—I proceed, in the last place, to shew  
what

what influence this faith ought to have upon our lives.

Whatever account of God represents him to us as a being of the greatest moral, as well as physical, perfections, must be the truest account that can be given of him: and this account must represent him as a being the most beneficent, most placable, most merciful, presiding over his creation, more particularly the rational part, with the most parental and providential care and affection; relieving the distresses of his creatures, supplying their wants, correcting their errors, and conducting them to happiness, by all the ways of wisdom and virtue; purifying their hearts and minds, guarding them against every offence to himself, and to one another, that must be destructive of their happiness; and recovering them from guilt when they offended, and re-instating them in that happiness ori-

ginally intended for them, as far as they were recoverable without force, and consistently with the freedom of their wills.

This is the account of the moral perfections of God, communicated to us in the sacred Writings; and that it is incomparably more just and perfect than all the antecedent accounts of all the wise men in the world upon that head, will be evident, beyond all possibility of doubt, to every candid inquirer; but the proof would be too tedious to be here inserted.

Also, that the physical accounts of his nature and perfections, in those Writings, are in the same degree eminent, beyond all those of the heathen world, is equally clear and indubitable.

Now, to both these accounts, equally clear from Scripture, agreeable to reason, and in a good degree investigable by it, there is another



other additional account, not pretended to be equally discoverable or conceivable by reason, but demonstrably neither absurd, nor contradictory, nor any way repugnant to reason; and that is the doctrine of the Trinity, which is acknowledged to be incomprehensible by the best human understanding: And can that character be conceived in any degree to impeach its truth? Quite otherwise, it is a necessary consequence, in the character of a superior nature, as hath already been shewn.

And, if any rational and religious advantages to mankind can fairly be deduced from this doctrine, as set forth in the Scriptures, it must add great strength to the proof of its being truly divine in its origin.

Whereas then we learn from the sacred Writings, that the whole race of mankind were, by the fall of *Adam*, become obnoxious to death;

and as they every day departed further from original righteousness, and sunk into greater degrees of corruption, and of consequence became more exposed to the divine wrath, and devoted to greater degrees of punishment; how otherwise can it be conceived that human guilt could be expiated, the divine wrath appeased, and the divine justice satisfied, but by this one counsel of adorable wisdom and mercy!—to wit, the redemption of lost mankind by *Christ Jesus*, by the perfect pattern of our blessed Saviour's life; by the all-sufficient sacrifice of his death, and by his mediation and merits.—For God the Father could not, in that very relation in which this devoted race sinned against him, make satisfaction to the divine justice in his own person, or undertake the office of a mediator with himself: and whereas the most perfect of created beings would, on many accounts,

counts, be unequal to the great work of redemption; for as the *Psalmist* expreſſeth it, *It coſt me more to redeem their ſouls, ſo that they might let that alone for ever*: it followeth, that a plurality of perſons in the divine nature was, as far as we can conceive, abſolutely neceſſary to this end. — The ſins of mankind were, moſt undoubtedly, of infinite guilt, — how elſe, then, was it poſſible that the divine juſtice could be ſatiſfied, which required a ſacrifice ſufficient to atone for infinite guilt: or how elſe could the ſins of the whole world be expiated, which demanded a ſacrifice, at once, of infinite merit and unblemiſhed purity? And who but the Son of God, who but a being of infinite perfection, could be ſuch a ſacrifice? And this conſideration ſhould not only excite in our minds a moſt humble and profound veneration of this exalted myſtery, but, likewise the deepeſt ſenſe



sense of gratitude and recognition of the infinite love and goodness of Almighty God to us—to us miserable sinners! who lay in darkness, and in the shadow of death, that he might make us the children of God, and exalt us to everlasting life.

Again, let it be observed, that, after the work of redemption was accomplished, and our blessed Saviour exalted in triumph to heaven, there was yet wanting one who should guide his apostles into all truth;—should perfectly preserve, inculcate, and transmit those divine precepts, upon which the salvation of mankind depended;—should bear irrefragable testimony to the truth of our blessed Saviour's divine mission, and demonstrate him the Son of God with power.

For, as he himself tells us, in the vth chapter of St. John, *If I bear record of myself, my witness is not true;* that is, if none testify of me, besides myself,

myself, my testimony, however true, will yet not be received as such, will not be true in the opinion of the world. — It became him therefore, nay, behoved him, to exhibit a witness, in this case, of undeniable veracity; such as could neither deceive, nor be deceived, and of infinite power likewise, who could confirm his testimony beyond all apprehension, or possibility of doubt, by mighty and repeated miracles of equal wisdom and goodness. And, forasmuch as this was a task which nothing less than God could execute, — behold! the third person of the sacred Trinity undertakes the mighty office, descends visibly and openly upon our blessed Lord's disciples, informs them in all the wonders of the gospel dispensation, and in one instant inspires them with new abilities to proclaim those wonders to the world, with such attestations as could not be resisted.

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— And forasmuch as, notwithstanding the great work of redemption finished, and the mission of the Son of God sufficiently confirmed, yet mankind might again relapse into mortal guilt, and would all, from the corruption of their nature, be neither able, nor inclined to do good; here also the divine mercy once more interposeth, and the Holy Ghost assureth us of his protection and assistance; that he will dwell with us, and help our infirmities; *working in us both to will and to do of his good pleasure.*— Yet still, as this assistance lays no force upon our faculties, and must be consistent with the freedom of our actions, and consequently must, from the great corruption of our nature, be often ineffectual to the purposes of piety, neither is our God wanting to us in this exigence; for in this case our Redeemer becomes our mediator, and *sitteth on the right hand of God to make*



*make continual intercession for us.—  
Oh the depth of the riches both of the  
wisdom and goodness of God!—amaz-  
ing wisdom and unspeakable good-  
ness! How unsearchable are thy judg-  
ments, and thy ways past finding out!*

This, my brethren, is the œco-  
nomy of our salvation; this is that  
doctrine of the blessed Trinity: a  
doctrine lightly esteemed of by the  
superficial, conceited, and libertine  
world, as a mere theological subtilty,  
a perplexing and useless speculation,  
of little consequence, either for in-  
forming our understandings, or a-  
mending our morals!—And yet I  
will be bold to say it is such a doc-  
trine, that an humble, a thorough,  
a religious contemplation of this di-  
vine mystery will be of greater ef-  
ficacy, with all ingenuous and good  
minds, to love and gratitude;—to a  
profound veneration of the divine  
wisdom and goodness; to a profound  
veneration of the amazing and ado-  
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table ways of infinite wisdom and mercy; and a deep horror of the heinousness of sin, than all the motives of morality, than all the precepts of philosophy, than all the schemes and refinements of human wisdom put together.—Nay, I had almost said, than all the other motives and persuasives of the Christian religion.—To consider God the Father, that great and glorious being, after the rebellion of his abandoned creatures, upon whom he had poured out so many blessings, looking down from heaven with god-like compassion upon the lost condition of mankind; contriving methods of salvation for us, and sending his beloved Son, even while we were enemies, to reconcile us to himself.—To behold that gracious, that eternal, that co-eternal Son of God, quitting the mansions of bliss, and descending to mortality; stooping to the lowest condition of it, spending

spending a tedious, afflictive life here on earth, and concluding it with a much more afflictive and ignominious death, for the redemption of us miserable sinners!—who lay in darkness and the shadow of death!—And, last of all, to contemplate the Holy Ghost coming down from heaven to guide and to assist us, to take up his residence in these mortal bodies, to direct us by his sacred influence here, and to conduct us to glory hereafter.—And can there be stronger, or nobler, or more exalted motives to amendment, to love, to adoration, to obedience, than all these? When a man is under any temptation to commit sin, let him lay his hand upon his heart, and then question thus with his own soul: Did my sins require a sacrifice of infinite merit, to expiate and atone for them in the sight of God; and shall I again commit them? Shall I make the sacrifice of the Son of God of no effect  
for



for my salvation? God forbid. Did all the persons of the blessed Trinity unite in one counsel of infinite wisdom and goodness for my redemption, and shall I join with sin and Satan to defeat it?—Shall we again provoke God?—Shall we again rebel against the Father?—Shall we again grieve the Holy Ghost?—Shall we again crucify the Son of God anew?—Hear the holy, the heavenly reasoning of St. *Paul* upon this head, in the *iiid* and *vith* chapters of his first epistle to the *Corinthians*:—*What ! know ye not, that whilst ye were enemies, God sought after you, to reconcile you to himself ? Know ye not, that you are bought with a price, the blood of the immaculate Lamb,—the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world?—Know ye not that your bodies are the members of Christ?—Shall I then take the members of Christ, and make them the members of a harlot ? God forbid.* First epistle to the *Corinthians*, *vith* chapter

chapter, and 15th verse. *Know ye not, that your bodies are the temples of the Holy Ghost, which is in you, which ye have of God, and ye are not your own?—Therefore glorify God in your body, and in your spirit, which are God's.*—Which if ye fail to do, learn that just and dreadful sentence, pronounced upon you, 1st epistle to the Corinthians, 3rd chapter, and 16th verse:—*Know ye not, that ye are the temple of God?—If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy.*

O my brethren,—know ye not, that *Jesus Christ* hath not only redeemed you from eternal misery, but recovered you to eternal glory and honour.—*Know ye not, that ye are, by this means, become the children of God! and, if children, then heirs:—heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ!*—O holy, blessed, and glorious Trinity! fountain of endless adoration and love!—Lord!

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what is man, that thou art thus mindful of him; or the son of man, that thou visitest him; that thou visitest him, with such infinite, such accumulated, such adorable mercy and salvation!

This, my brethren, is the one uniform, consistent, coherent, adorable scheme of our redemption.—These are the mysteries of the Christian religion.—These the pledges of our hope, and the foundation of our happiness.—These the glorious, the divine truths, by which our souls are exalted, and our pride subdued;—our love inflamed, our lives reformed, and our salvation insured.—The scoff of *Atheists* and *Arians*.—The reproach of poor, proud, prophane, pitiable mortals; and the desire and admiration of angels!

*Oh Lord! how manifold are thy works! in wisdom hast thou made them all, the earth is full of thy riches.*

And



And now, my beloved brethren, give me leave to exhort you in the words of St. Jude, that ye earnestly contend for the faith, which was once delivered to the saints.—And remember the words which were spoken before, of the apostles, of our Lord Jesus Christ, how they told you there should be mockers in the last time, who would walk after their own ungodly lusts.—These be they who separate themselves, sensual, having not the Spirit.—But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, and praying in the Holy Ghost—keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life.



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A short, and I hope not unsatisfactory, Dissertation upon the 7th and 8th Verses of the vth Chapter of *St. John's first Epistle.*

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7. *For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost; and these three are one.*

8. *And there are three that bear witness in earth, the spirit, and the water, and the blood; and these three agree in one.*

I Believe it cannot be doubted that this passage hath occasioned more dispute and dissension throughout the Christian world, than almost any other in the sacred Scriptures.



Some asserting that the seventh verse was no part of the original text, because so many antient manuscripts were found without it; and others, that it must be genuine, because it was found in several copies of great antiquity and unsuspected purity.

Now, in my humble opinion, this controversy might, at first, have been compromised and quieted by one, as simple and seemingly plain, and obvious an observation as ever occurred on any occasion; and that is, that when two sentences come together; I mean follow one another immediately, in any writing, each beginning and ending (or either) with the same word, one of them is, in the transcribing, usually left out; and yet, natural and obvious as this observation is, the author hath not the vanity to call it his own; no, it was imparted by a printer, remarkably candid and upright,

right, as well as experienced, Mrs. *Grier*son\*, of *Dublin*, who assured me, that in all her printing practice, which was very great for her years (several folio's) she never met with two sentences coming together, and beginning and ending with the same word, wherein one of them was not ordinarily left out in the proof sheet.

This gave me the hint, to examine and inquire carefully how the case was, with regard to the transcripts of my own manuscripts; and, indeed, I found the fact was the same, in instances too numerous to be counted.

Now all manuscript copies of the New Testament, whether new or old, are, in effect (throughout the common course) proof sheets, with

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\* A Woman remarkably learned, and, for that reason, married to a printer of good fame, whom Lord *Carteret*, then Lord Lieutenant of *Ireland*, made King's printer for her merit.

this disadvantage to the more ancient, that, when a mistake was once made in any of them, it could not be amended; the letters being so close, as is well known, that no art of man could insert any single letter between any two of those before written. So that nothing was then left, to remedy the evil, but writing the omitted words in the margin of the manuscript; and when this was done, as it often was, and in the same hand-writing, and with the same ink, it is a fair presumption, that those words were part of the original text, so meant to be supplied.

Hence it follows, that, without a very particular care and attention, no manuscript could be perfect; and hence it is, that so many thousands of errata are found in the manuscripts of all books that ever were carefully examined,

And,



And; if this be ordinarily the case in all contiguous sentences, beginning and ending (or either) with the same words, how much more frequent must mistakes and errors be in those sentences, in which not only the beginning and ending, but likewise several of the intermediate words are the very same? as is remarkably the case in the verses above-mentioned, as any man may see, by casting his eye upon the original *Greek*; and the case must be the same, at least nearly, in all close translations, whether *Latin* or *English*.

A signal proof of this occurred to me, some years ago, in the King's library, in *Essex-house*, in *Essex-street*, *London*; where the librarian, a man singularly skilled in the characters and ages of manuscripts, shewed me a manuscript version of the New Testament by *St. Jerome*, nine hundred years old; in the preface

face to which, he complained, that the *Arians* had erased this 7th verse of St. *John's* first epistle out of their Bibles, and yet was it not to be found in the text of that very manuscript.

Now, the case being thus, in fact, it is, I apprehend, of no great moment to inquire into the cause; and yet, I think, even that can be probably accounted for.

All mankind are naturally disposed to lessen their own labour, as much as possible; and therefore all transcribers, when they are copying, more naturally cast their eye below where they left off than above; and so, if the word be the same with that where they left off, the upper line is more naturally, and in fact more usually, left out, than the lower.

Good Heaven! What a waste of abuse and ill blood might have been saved, and difficulties amongst Christian

tian critics solved, if this plain, simple fact had been attended to, as it ought; for example,

Let this question be asked, Why was not this seventh verse quoted, as it naturally should have been, had it been extant, by several antient writers, in their defence of the doctrine of the Trinity?

The answer is obvious; it was not to be found in their manuscript copies of this epistle.

Why then did they assert this doctrine of the Trinity?

*Ans.* Because it was deducible from other Scriptures, and because it doubtless was part of that *form of sound words* mentioned by St. Paul; and that there was such a form is doubtless, because, without such a form, it was impossible for any one, grown up to a reasonable age, to be introduced and incorporated into the Christian church; and for that reason we find this belief of the Trinity



nity established amongst all Christians over the world! and, indeed, a general belief of the Trinity amongst all *Jews* and Heathens also, if the doctrine had been coeval with the world, as I do verily believe it was.

But if this text was so long lost, as it seems to have been, at least to a great part of the world, how was it found, and how is it now proved to be genuine? I answer; some truths might be obscured by various accidents, and for a time hid from the notice of the world, like some rivers, that sink into the earth, and are hid from the eye for a considerable space, and yet emerge again, with sufficient evidence of being the very same that were before concealed.

The epistles of all the apostles, doubtless, carried sufficient proofs of their authenticity to all the churches, to which they were originally

ginally sent; the originals of which, *Tertullian* (in his treatise *de Præscriptione Hæreticorum*) assures us, were then extant in the several churches founded by the apostles, and read to the people, with such circumstances of truth and certainty, as no other records I ever heard of were ever guarded with; at the same time referring the heretics, to whom he wrote, to examine them, in many of the nearest and most contiguous churches, as *Corinth*, *Philippi*, and *Thessalonica*; and *Ephesus*, the next in *Asia*; not forgetting *Rome*, so conspicuous in *Europe*.

Indeed, he refers them not to very remote churches, such as those of *Parthia*, to which the letter was sent, and possibly the latest of any of the apostolical epistles, because the difficulty of examining them must make the truth more liable to be suspected.

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And as this epistle was written late in the apostle's life, and long after the epistles of the other apostles (for he long survived them all) and to a remote nation, early and long harassed with wars and commotions; it is no wonder, that it was not admitted into the canon of Scripture, till some time after all the rest; which proves nothing but the great care and caution of the churches, in admitting nothing as canonical, without the fullest evidence.

Still the question is asked, why is the council of *Nice* silent upon this point?

The answer is obvious; the doctrine of the Trinity was never called in question before them; consequently, no decision upon the point should be expected from them.

I beg leave to assure the reader, that a display of learning, in a croud of quotations upon the subject in question,



question, was never any part of my purpose in this dissertation; and therefore I hope he will be content with a few plain and easy proofs of the authenticity of the text; proofs clearly satisfactory to myself; and, if they should not become so to him, I shall deem, and lament it, as much more his misfortune, than mine.

My first proof is the testimony of *Tertullian*, in his treatise against *Praxeas*, cap. xxv. *Connexus patris in filio, et filii in paraclete, tres efficit coherentes, alterum in altero; qui tres unum, sunt, non unus*; the connexion of the Father in the Son, and of the Son in the Paraclete, effects three, cohering or conjoined, one with the other; which three are one being, not one person; one respecting the unity of substance, not the singularity of number, as he himself explains it.

Here *Tertullian's* expressing the word *one*, by the *Latin*, *unum*, in the

the neuter gender, not *unus* in the masculine, seems to me to be done after the example of *Christ* himself, in the xii<sup>th</sup> chapter of St. *Matthew's* gospel, at the 41<sup>st</sup> and 42<sup>d</sup> verses; where, speaking of *Jonas* and *Solomon*, he says (as our translators render it) *a greater than Jonas*, and *a greater than Solomon*, is here; using the word *greater* in the neuter gender, in both places; if he had used the masculine gender, it would naturally have been understood, that he meant a greater man; whereas, using it in the neuter, it can only be understood, that he meant a greater being; and, indeed, in the strictness of construction, it should be *a more than Jonas*, and *a more than Solomon*; plainly implying, that his being contained more than a mere prophet, or a mere wise man; that is, more than human nature.

Indeed,

Indeed, some of *Tertullian's* words are vulgar, and suggest but a rude and imperfect idea of the union of the divine and human natures (and what imaginable language of mortals, on such a subject, can be other, or can do more!) but their meaning is sufficiently plain and intelligible.

My next proof is from St. *Cyprian*, who, as well as *Tertullian*, appears to me clearly enough to quote this text, before *Arius* was born; and, consequently, both these are clear of all possible suspicion of fraud, or falshood, upon this point. This proof is taken from his epistle to *Jubaianus*, in which he plainly supports his argument with the same text, *cum tres unum sunt*, since, or seeing that, the three are one being.

But more expressly, in his book of the Unity of the Church, in these words, *de patre, et filio, et spiritu sancto, scriptum est, hi tres unum sunt*; of the Father, the Son, and

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Holy Ghost, it is written (quoting the Scripture as our Saviour did in his temptation by *Satan*) *these three are one, i. e. one being.*

My next proof is taken from the impossibility of forging or falsifying any manuscript text, without the most glaring and infamous detection.

The last proof that I shall urge, upon this point, is the authority of the best considered editions of the New Testament; those of the *Complutenses*, of *Stevens*, and *Erasmus*.

The first of these, vouching the authority of the most antient and estimable manuscripts, in the *Vatican*; and the second, the combined authority of many manuscripts of venerable, and almost adorable, antiquity.

And, as to *Erasmus*, he is well known to have been not only the most learned, but also the most free-thinking (in the true original sense of

of the word) of any man of his age; not swayed by prejudice, nor warped by bigotry.

And, besides all this, under some suspicion of being inclined to *Arianism*, nor is he strictly orthodox in his comment upon this verse.

But, besides the outward proofs of the originality of this seventh verse, of which the reader may find many more in *Mills's Comment* on this epistle in his *Greek Testament*, and *Bull's Defence* of the *Nicene Faith*, give me leave to add, that, in my humble opinion, this seventh verse, in its connection with the preceding and following verses, carrieth in itself internal and irresistible evidence of its being genuine.

Suppose this seventh verse left out, the text will then stand thus:

Ver. 6. *This is he that came by water and blood, even Jesus Christ; not by water only, but by water and blood;*

*and it is the Spirit that beareth witness, because the Spirit is truth.*

*Ver. 8. And there are three that bear witness in earth, the spirit, and the water, and the blood; and these three agree in one.*

*Ver. 9. If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater; for this is the witness of God, which he hath testified of his Son.*

In this case, we see, that the eighth verse will follow the sixth, and begin with the connecting particle, *and*; which, if the seventh verse were left in, would be right and reasonable; but if the seventh verse be left out, will be absurd, for then this connecting particle will have nothing to connect.

Also the ninth verse, we see, is employed in vouching the testimony of God the Father, and the preference that should be given to his divine attestation above the human: but, if this seventh verse be left out,  
there



there is no preceding attestation from God the Father, for that exists not but in the seventh verse.

Now, although this proof needs no illustration, let us, however, for farther satisfaction, suppose a similar case in any profane author.

Suppose two manuscripts of *Cæsar's* account of the battle of *Pharalia*, in the third book of his *Commentaries*.

Suppose one of these manuscripts beginning thus:

*Cæsar, steady to the resolution he had before taken, placed the ninth legion in his left wing.*

And suppose the other manuscript beginning thus:

*Cæsar, steady to the resolution he had before taken, placed the tenth legion in his right wing, and the ninth in his left.*

Now, suppose the manuscripts, containing the first reading, were ten times as numerous as those which

contained the second, is there a critic of common sense, who would not prefer one of the latter reading to ten thousand of the former?

Could any mortal, who had read *Cæsar's* Commentaries with any attention, imagine, that he would, on that important occasion, either make no account, or no mention, of the tenth legion, which he remarkably loved, and in which he most confided; or that, over-looking the tenth, he would make mention only of the ninth, for which he had no distinguished regard?

The man, who could persuade himself of this, might possibly bring himself to believe, that St. *John* might intirely omit the joint evidence of the three divine persons in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost, in favour of our Saviour's divinity in heaven, or postpone them to the witnesses on earth; and St. *John* was as surely attached,  
in

in the warmest affection, and highest veneration, to the person of our blessed Saviour, his beloved lord, master, and friend, as *Cæsar* was in his love of the tenth legion, in preference to every other.

To conclude; can any thinking man, who knows any thing of *St. John*, imagine, that he would leave out any proof in favour of his blessed Redeemer, especially that most important attestation of God the Father, who had called down twice from heaven, *This is my beloved Son*; or that this beloved apostle would omit the evidence of *Christ* being then in heaven, where *St. Stephen* saw him standing at the right hand of God?

Surely the presumption is very strong to the contrary, that he would, on this occasion, rather repeat and accumulate, than omit any evidence, in favour of his divinity, as he does remarkably, both in fa-



vour of that and his humanity, in the three first verses of his epistle.

And the apostle's manner appears clearly to me to be characteristic and congenial in both; let the reader judge.

Ver. 1. *That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled of the Word of life;*

Ver. 2. *(For the life was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness, and shew unto you that eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us)*

Ver. 3. *That which we have seen and heard declare we unto you.*

To sum up all.

To reject this seventh verse would be to reject the testimony of two as unsuspectable witnesses as ever lived, *Tertullian* and *St. Cyprian*; who could have no end in forging and falsifying, having written before the  
subject

subject was ever made a question—  
Nay it would, in effect, be discrediting  
the whole *African* church, who cer-  
tainly read it, not only in the trans-  
lation, but in the original *Greek*,  
before the days of *Arius*; for *Ter-*  
*tullian* was a most able *Grecian*.

To reject it would be to give  
credit to any idle supposition of cor-  
ruptions and interpolations in the  
text; which, in the nature of things,  
was impossible; whereas omissions  
were easy and natural, and, in many  
instances, impossible to be avoided.

And, as to the objection from the  
silence of many writers, it can carry  
at best no more than the credit of ne-  
gative evidence; and no negative  
testimony had ever yet any great  
weight in opposition to positive  
proof.

To reject this verse would be to  
discredit the judgment of very able  
critics, who clearly perceive a mu-  
tilation

tilation in the text, when that verse is left out.

Would be to discredit all those early and learned publishers of the noblest editions of the New Testament; the *Complutenses*, and *Stevens*, and *Erasmus*; who all printed it as genuine, and had incomparably better authority for so doing, than can now be urged against it from all the manuscripts upon earth.

And, lastly, it would be to wound the memory of *St. John* in the tenderest point, as it would be to suppose a strange abatement in the ardour and flow of his affection to his most excellent and well beloved master and friend, at a time when it should naturally be heightened; and would, indeed, be to injure him, much more than *Cæsar* could be injured by suppressing all mention of the tenth legion, in his account of the battle of *Pharsalia*.

S E R-



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## S E R M O N I V.

Preached for the Support and En-  
largement of the Infirmary at  
*Bath.*

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*Galatians, Chap. vi. Ver. 10.*

*As we have therefore opportunity, let  
us do good unto all men, especially  
unto them who are of the household  
of faith.*

**I**T is clear from these words, that  
our obligations to do good ex-  
tend to all mankind; and, indeed,  
this is so plainly the dictate of rea-  
son, and the instinct of nature, that  
wise

wise men are agreed in it, and vouch with one voice, <sup>16</sup> that universal benevolence, good-will to the whole world (the effect of which is doing all the good in our power) is the first, *at least one main* principle, and at the same time one of the strongest propensities of human nature; and that all the social laws are reducible to this one head.

When we consider this, one would think it did not need any great recommendation, or mighty enforcement, to engage men to the practice of it; but so great is the corruption consequent to our fall, that it hath perverted the very tendencies of our nature, and depraved every distinguishing excellence in it; and therefore this duty of doing good, which was originally one great principle and rule of our actions; and is still, to a virtuous mind, the greatest social pleasure and noblest employment: yet, with the bulk of mankind,

kind, it standeth in need of the utmost exhortation and enforcement; insomuch that the dictates of reason, the instinct of nature, and even the sanctions of rewards and punishments, are, too often, insufficient to allure, or even compel men to it.

It is sufficiently evident, that it was for this very reason that God Almighty *made all nations of men of one blood*, as *St. Paul* expresth it, that the duty might become more agreeable, and more delightful, as it became more extended; inasmuch as all mankind find a natural joy, in relieving, comforting, and blessing their own flesh and blood:—this is the known case of all men of one and the same family.—And one would think that this consideration might supersede the necessity of that fine precept of *St. Paul*, in the verse immediately going before the words of my text:

*Let*



*Let us not be weary in well doing* (one of the finest precepts that ever fell from inspired lips) and the reason, upon which the apostle grounds this divine monition, is of great importance; *for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not*; the toil and expence of sowing might very naturally discourage the husbandman, if the hopes of a happy harvest did not lighten the labour, and enliven him under it.

To these general motives for doing good, the apostle added one, which was peculiar to the *Galatians*, in the character of Christians; *especially unto them who are of the household of faith*.—And this is well known to have been so powerful a motive with the primitive Christians, that it became matter not only of universal observation, but also of astonishment among the Heathens; *see how these Christians love one another*!

My  
guileless

My brethren, all these general motives, with every particular that can be added to them, concur to the purpose of this assembly and this discourse; which is to recommend, both to your humanity and Christian charity, the General Hospital, or Infirmary, of this city: the common receptacle of many sick of both of these nations,—and only scene of their relief.—I might add one great ornament, honour, and blessing of *Great Britain*.

It is one peculiar and eminent character of our blessed Saviour *Jesus Christ*, that he went about doing good; he thought no time tedious, that could be thus employed: no place too distant, no travel too toilsome, that could conduct him to this end; nor any human creature too mean, too contemptible, to be attended upon, to this purpose: *he went about doing good*.—Healing every infirmity, curing every disease, relieving

relieving every want, correcting every error, reproofing every vice that afflicted mankind; God-like employment! God-like humility! God-like goodness!

My brethren, to have this example perpetually before our eyes is our surest guide; and to follow it, with close attention, our greatest glory! And surely we can nowhere follow it, to greater advantage, than in this place; it may be no where to so great advantage! Our blessed Saviour went about doing good; he went about seeking occasions of beneficence, and objects on whom to employ it: my brethren, both objects and occasions are here brought to our door.—The distressed of many regions, perhaps of many nations, are here gathered together, to call upon your compassion, as it were with one voice; you may consider this city as one great centre of human miseries, where  
you



you may stretch out your hands to the relief of great numbers at once, without the least toil, or travel, or trouble to effect it; you may relieve many miseries here, which you can relieve no where else: for, though the miserable, under like maladies, are else-where to be met with, yet the means of their cure are here only to be found;—here you may have the noblest opportunity, not only of imitating, but also, in some degree, emulating, your God and Saviour's blessed example; here you may often relieve ten lepers (it may be more than ten lepers) at one time!—God hath not, indeed bestowed, upon you the same miraculous powers for effecting this; but he, and he only, hath bestowed upon you the means by which it may be effected; by his blessing upon your charitable endeavours; by the influence of his Holy Spirit upon your hearts; by bestowing upon this city,

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where you reside, the blessing of such salutary and sanative, such healthful and healing waters, as are not perhaps exceeded, it may be not equalled, in any other region of the earth!—And by providing a number of able and excellent physicians and surgeons, to promote and accomplish your charitable purposes, by directing and advising how to minister this blessed medicine to the greatest advantage: men who make a conscience of their duty in this point, and are as assiduous in their attendance upon the sick poor of this infirmary, as if their daily bread depended upon it: and, indeed, it may depend upon it, more than is commonly imagined: for *it is the blessing of the Lord that maketh rich*, nor are the means inadequate to the end, inasmuch as their constant and conscientious care of these diseased and distressed poor are the surest means of drawing down this blessing upon

upon them.—The surest means both of improving their skill, and, with that, increasing their credit and their practice in proportion; and at the same time drawing down the divine protection and benediction upon themselves and their endeavours.

Nor should the clergy of this city be wholly unhonoured with their portion of praise, for attending this house of sickness, and discharging all the offices of a truly Christian ministry and piety towards their afflicted brethren; daily attending (each in their turns) advising, admonishing, and exhorting their afflicted brethren;—advising, when advice and admonition are most wanting, and most likely to be effectual; and seasonably exhorting them to offer up their humble prayers to the God of mercy and health, in petitions for pardon and health, and in thanks for their recovery: and, it may be, on many occasions



to offer up their humble thanks, for his fatherly, seasonable, and kind correction and chastisement in their several ailments and maladies, whereby they were checked in their vicious course; awakened to the calls of conscience, and happily brought back, from the dreadful guilt of offending God, and the dreadful danger that awaits it:—to a right sense of their duty to him, and the solid and superior happiness of discharging it with an upright conscience and a contrite heart.

An antient moralist tells us, that *a good man contending with adversity is a conflict worthy the Gods to behold*: how much more, then, two orders of men, I hope and believe of good men, one contending with all the calamities of disease, and the other with all the miseries of guilt; one to save their brethren and recover them from all the racks and pangs of pain, and the other to save and  
redeem

redeem them from all the racks of conscience and torments of hell!—both endeavouring to bless them, to bless their brethren, to bring together and re-unite the two greatest felicities that human nature is capable of in this world,—a sound mind in a sound body:—how much, how unspeakably more, are these objects well pleasing, and of glad acceptance in the sight of God, than that of *Seneca's*!—And if these are objects well pleasing in the sight of God—the God o' mercy! my brethren, is it possible they should not be so in your's?—Can you withhold your aid from these humane, these Christian combatants in the cause of charity?—These champions in the cause of piety and virtue, of health and happiness, against the triumphs of impiety, vanity, and vice, and their constant attendants, pain and misery! Will you not join, readily and gladly join, in

this glorious conflict! that you may also be happily joined in the immortal honour and glory of the conquest, added to the heavenly prize that awaits it.

My brethren, you have now before you some of the saddest calamities of *Job*, waiting for your relief; and you have, at the same time, more than all his consolations, for so doing, within your reach:—it is now in your power, like him, to be *eyes to the blind, and feet to the lame*;—it is now in your power, by stretching out your hands liberally to the indigent and distressed of this house, to derive every relief and consolation to your own souls, which that humble and excellent man felt in every condition; which supported him under his heaviest afflictions, and gave joy and transport to his most exalted state; when, as he himself expresseth it, *the candle of the Lord shined upon his head.*—

When



When the blessing of God came down upon him, like a light from heaven, diffusing a glory and a lustre all around him.—O my brethren, do you with your wealth as he did with his, that *the candle of the Lord may also shine upon your heads!*—Do you as he did, and then may you cry out with him, *When the ear heard me, then it blessed me; and, when the eye saw me, it gave witness to me:—because I delivered the poor that cried, and the fatherless, and him that had none to help him: the blessing of him that was ready to perish came upon me: and I caused the widow's heart to sing for joy! I was a father to the poor.*

St. John tells us, in the vth chapter of his gospel, that there was in Jerusalem a pool, called in the Hebrew tongue Bethesda: (that is, the house of mercy) having five porches: in these lay a great multitude of impotent folk, of blind, halt, withered, waiting for

the moving of the water, for an angel went down, at a certain season, into the pool, and troubled the water; whosoever then first, after the troubling of the water, stepped in, was made whole of whatsoever disease he had.

In this place, the apostle tells us, an impotent man had lain for thirty-eight years, waiting for his cure; but he waited in vain, for want of some friendly hand to help him into the pool.

Alas! my brethren, is not this the case of infinite numbers among us, who wait to be put into this salutary pool; who wait here, but without one porch, without one friendly portico, to protect them from the inclemency of the weather, in the mean time? But, although they have no portico to protect them, God forbid they should long wait for some friendly hand to help them in.—My brethren, now  
is

is your time;—you have now a blessed opportunity of doing good; God only knows whether I, or the halest of those that hear me, may ever have another.—I, in the infirmities of old-age, am more in the road to death; but the youngest, and halest of you all, are equally within his reach.—My brethren, now is your time to draw down that blessing from heaven, which is pronounced upon them that have a true attention to the distresses of the wretched: *Blessed is the man that provideth for the sick and needy, the Lord shall deliver him in the time of trouble!*

Here, my brethren, the sick and the needy call upon your compassion together; shut not your ears against the call; shut not your ears to the voice of misery! listen to the monition of the wise son of *Sirach*, and *reject not the supplication of the afflicted.* Surely you cannot reject it, you cannot resist the cry of such united,



united, such complicated calamities!

As you hope for mercy from your Father which is in heaven, shew it to your brethren here; your afflicted brethren, in this house of mercy, the *blessed Bethesda* of this happy city.

It is well worth your while to recollect, that our blessed Saviour *Jesus Christ* wrought many miracles, to accomplish the mercies this day recommended to your charity; and I am not sure but that God continued a miraculous power to the pool of *Bethesda* for the same ends, when the power of miracles had ceased every-where else from among the *Jews*.—I am, in my private judgment, fully satisfied that he did continue a miraculous power to this blessed pool, after it had ceased elsewhere, as for many other wise and good ends, unknown to us; so possibly for this also, to teach us how peculiarly

peculiarly such works and means of mercies are pleasing in his sight; in his sight *with whom is the well of life*; be that as it may, let me be allowed, on this occasion, to beseech you to put every one the question seriously to their own hearts, How can I employ my superfluity of wealth, my fulness of fortune, better, than in support of the charity which now calls upon me?—How better than to redeem this hospital from the narrow contracted stinted state, to which envy, avarice, and evil accidents have reduced it; and exalt it to its original and more extensive use and excellence; to redeem fifty more of my fellow-creatures from misery, for ever! in succession; even to alleviate and recover so many more of my Christian brethren in misery, whose souls gasp after these salutary waters. *as a thirsty land!*

Finally, my brethren, and infinitely above all other considerations,

tions, let me earnestly beseech you seasonably to reflect, and carefully to remember, how much your fate, at the day of judgment, will depend upon the discharge of the duty, this day, recommended to you.

Here you have all the several kinds of your blessed Saviour's distressed brethren and substitutes, to be relieved at once.—Here are the *naked* to be cloathed; the *hungry* to be fed; the *thirsty* to be refreshed with the streams of this salutary water:—the *sick* to be visited; the *stranger* to be taken in:—the *imprisoned* to be set free.

My brethren, the lame, the withered, the maimed, the bed-ridden, are the prisoners of providence: the most pitiable of all prisoners!—their punishments heavier, probably as their guilt was greater!—manacled and fettered with ailments and diseases of various kinds: loaded and labouring under the heaviest of all chains!



chains—*fast bound in misery* (as the Psalmist expresseth it)—in misery much worse than that of common captives, under bolts and links of iron—do then to those your brethren, as the angel of the Lord did to St. *Peter* in his chains (*Acts* the xiith chapter, and 7th verse)—let your light shine upon them in their prison; raise them up from the earth, and shake off their chains—do this and insure to yourselves all,—more than all, the solid consolations of *Job*, under his heaviest calamities!—do this, and aspire to the noblest honour and office of angels, of guardian-angels! do this, and imitate him whom angels and archangels adore, your blessed Lord and Saviour *Jesus Christ*.—At once imitate his example and obey his commands; well remembering, that what ye now do to one of these, the least and lowest of the brethren of the blessed

110 *For the Support, &c.*

bleſſed *Jeſus*, he will acknow-  
ledge and reward at the laſt day,  
as done to himſelf: ſo ſhall ye be  
intituled to that moſt glorious and  
gracious of all divine rewards and  
ſentences, which ſhall be pronoun-  
ced upon you at the laſt day, from  
the mouth of your God and Sa-  
viour *Jeſus Chriſt*, Come, ye bleſſed of  
my Father, inherit the kingdom pre-  
pared for you from the foundation of  
the world.

O God, of thine infinite mercy,  
ſo prepare, incline, and inſpire our  
hearts this day, as to intitle us to  
that bleſſed ſentence, at the day of  
judgment, through the merits and  
mediation of *Jeſus Chriſt*. Amen.

THE  
S E R-  
mon, why our bleſſed ſaviour came  
to ſave into the world

538 (1761)  
S E R M O N V.

Preached in St. Anne's, Dublin, on  
*Christmas-day, 1761:*

Shewing that our blessed Saviour  
*Jesus Christ* was sent into the  
World in the most critical Pe-  
riod, for amending it, for evi-  
dencing the Truth of his Doc-  
trine, and conveying that Evi-  
dence to all future Ages.

*Galatians, Chap. iv. Part of Ver. 4.*

*But, when the fulness of time was  
come, God sent forth his Son, made  
of a woman.*

**I**T hath been made a difficulty  
by men of subtilty and scepti-  
cism, why our blessed Saviour came  
so late into the world.

If



If a Saviour was necessary for the salvation of mankind, why was his coming so long delayed?

In answer to this, we own it too difficult a task for human wisdom to search, with exactness, into the secrets of the divine conduct, and to pronounce upon them with certainty! and therefore, where we cannot explain the reasons of the divine dispensations, common sense and decency teach us, that nothing can better become such beings as we are, than to acquiesce and submit, with humility, to the determinations of an infinitely wise and good God!—It is not for us to prescribe to the Almighty, or to determine the times and the seasons of his dispensations: however, if, in the point before us, we can, upon a candid inquiry, find out any circumstances that seem to give this appointed time any peculiar fitness for the attainment of the ends proposed by sending

*in the most critical Period.* 113

sending a Saviour into the world, we ought, by no means, to overlook or disregard them; and, that many such circumstances and characters of peculiar fitness attended the time of our blessed Saviour's appearance upon earth, I shall endeavour to shew, in the following discourse.

And the first thing that I shall observe, concerning the time of *Christ's* coming into the world, is a very remarkable circumstance of his birth, which you may read in the second chapter of St. *Luke's* Gospel, at the beginning of that chapter:—*And it came to pass in those days, that there went out a decree from Cæsar Augustus, that all the world (that is, all the Roman empire) should be taxed, (and this taxing was first made when Cyrenius was governor of Syria) and all went to be taxed, every one into his own city; and Joseph also went up from Galilee, out*  
I of

*of the city of Nazareth, into Judæa, unto the city of David, which is called Bethlehem (because he was of the house and lineage of David) to be taxed, with Mary his espoused wife, being great with child—And so it was, that, whilst they were there, the days were accomplished, that she should be delivered.—And she brought forth her first-born Son, &c.*

Now the word, which is here rendered *taxed*, doth, in the original, signify *to inscribe or enroll*; and the meaning of it is this:—*Augustus*, the Roman Emperor, had a curiosity to take a survey of his whole empire, and to enroll the whole number of its inhabitants, according to their families, and fortunes, and dignities, and employments—for this reason *Joseph* and *Mary* were obliged to go from the city of *Nazareth*, where they dwelt, to the city of *Bethlehem*, in *Judæa*, to be there enrolled in their own tribe,  
and



and their own family ; and it came to pass, that, *whilst they were there, Mary, being great with child,* was delivered of her first-born son *Jesus Christ*, our blessed Saviour.

Now, in this account of *Christ's* birth, the interposition of the divine providence, whereby *Augustus's* curiosity was over-ruled, is greatly observable in two instances.

The first is, that, the birth and parentage of *Christ* being, by this means, registered in so public a manner, the certainty of it might remain upon record, beyond all possibility of being disputed or denied.

The next is, that by means of this enrolling, *Mary* was brought from her own dwelling-place to *Bethlehem*, where the prophets had foretold, that the *Messiah* must be born ; and this at the very point of time wherein *Mary*, being great with child, and going up to *Bethle-*  
I 2 *hem,*

*hem*, to be enrolled, was there delivered; and so the seed of *David*, and branch of *Jesse* (as *Christ* is called) which was conceived at *Nazareth*, was born at *Bethlehem*; which otherwise, in all probability, could not have happened in that place, as the prophets had foretold it should.—And what renders the providence of God yet farther remarkable in this case is, that this enrolling had been begun by *Augustus*, twenty-seven years before the birth of *Christ*, but was by God's wise appointment (through occasion of some commotions in the empire) deferred to this very point of time, wherein all circumstances so surprisingly concurred to the fulfilling that prophecy concerning the *Messiah*, that he should be born at *Bethlehem*; and that not only without any design, but likewise perfectly beside the intention of those who caused the accomplishment of it.

it.—Our blessed Saviour was to be of the seed of *David*, and was to be born at *Bethlehem*, the prophets had so determined; had he come into the world in any period of time antecedent to this, *Bethlehem* was either wholly in the hands of the *Jews*, or wholly in the hands of the *Gentiles*: had his birth been attested only by the *Gentiles*, the most authentic and natural witnesses of it had been wanting: had it been attested only by the *Jews*, their testimony might have been suspected, by the rest of the world, of design, and a combination in fraud, to carry on a national interest.—Had it been denied by the *Jews*, and not attested by the *Gentiles* (as the *Jews* were wicked enough to deny any thing that was disagreeable or disadvantageous to them) then the certainty of it could have had no incontestable proof; whereas, *Bethlehem* being in possession of the *Jews*



under the dominion of the *Gentiles*, and the birth and family of *Jesus* being registered, in so public a manner, by the *Gentiles*, the *Jews* have never yet dared to deny either,— And so the certainty of both hath remained authentic and undisputed from that day to this.

The case is clear, then, that this was the proper period for our blessed Saviour's coming into the world.

Another very memorable circumstance of the time of our blessed Saviour's birth is this:—That the whole known world was, at that time, in a most profound peace: and this circumstance is the more remarkable, because possibly such an event never happened, from the time the several parts of the earth became inhabited to that time; and, indeed, it is scarcely possible, in the nature of things, that all the different nations of the world, all the jealousy, and pride, and ambition, and opposite interests

interests of mankind, should conspire into one universal calm, unless under one universal monarchy, and that too administered with very uncommon moderation and wisdom; which was exactly the case of *Augustus's* reign, and more particularly that part of it in which our blessed Saviour was born; and whereas all the prophecies of the Old Testament agree in describing the times of the *Messiah*, as a season of uncommon and surprizing tranquillity; and the *Sybilline* oracles, which cannot, with any shew of consistency, be applied to any other person, concur in the same thing: *Pacatumque reget patriis virtutibus orbem*, “and  
“ he shall rule the world settled in  
“ peace, with the virtues of a father,  
“ or of his father.”—And the angel, at the hour of our blessed Saviour's birth, proclaimed *glory to God on high, and on earth peace*.—It is surprizingly remarkable, that this event

came to pass in that time, in which only it was (in all probability) possible to come to pass, from the well-peopling of the world to that time.

And as the calm of peace is the proper season of study and reflection (which are lost in the hurry and din of war) this was the season, of all others, the best fitted for a full inquiry and thorough examination of any new opinion that should rise up in the world, in opposition to the religions every-where established: and if we add to this, that, as it was a season of the greatest leisure, so it was an age of the greatest learning, both among the *Jews* and *Gentiles*, of any from the foundation of the world; the consequence must be, that this was the time, of all others, the least proper for the appearance or admission of fraud, or imposture of any kind.

The



The fabulous age was now at an end, and the credit of history clear and unclouded: and that it was the age of greatest learning is admitted on all hands: it is the age, to this day, the most studied and best known of all antiquity; and consequently the transactions of that age are best known, and least liable to be disputed, or forgotten: it was the age best fitted to examine and establish truth, and confound all ill-grounded pretences to it.

Nor is this all; for, as it was an age of the greatest learning, so also was it the age of the best taste, the truest eloquence, and most enlarged inquiries of philosophy:—the books of that age are the standards of ingenuity and good sense to this day.—The wisdom of this world was then at its height; so appointed of God, that the simple and unartful force of divine truth, which

which was to make its way into the world, in opposition to all the refinements of philosophy, and all the force of eloquence, should thereby be rendered more illustrious.—And that its being so rendered might remain attested, beyond all possibility of doubt, to this day, and to the end of the world.

The next thing that I shall take notice of, concerning the time of *Christ's* coming into the world is, that there was a general expectation of the *Messiah* at that time, not only among the *Jews*, but over all the East: this appears, not only from many passages in the Holy Scriptures, but likewise from the concurrent testimonies both of *Jewish* and *Gentile* writers.

As to the first, it is said of *Anna* the prophetess, *Luke* ii. 38, that *she gave thanks unto the Lord, and spake of Jesus to all them that looked for redemption*

*demption in Jerusalem; from whence it appeareth, that not only she, but many others looked for a Redeemer in Israel, at that time:—again, at the iiii chapter of St. Luke's Gospel, and the 15th verse, we find that, when John appeared among the Jews, living and teaching after a very extraordinary manner, the people were in expectation, and all men mused in their hearts, whether he were the Christ or not; the same appeareth from many other passages of the New Testament.*

And that there was likewise a general expectation, at that time, over all the East, of such a very extraordinary person as the *Messiah* is described to be, who should arise out of *Judæa*, appears from the travel of the wise men, to bring presents and worship him, at the sight of his star; inquiring where he was that *was born King of the Jews?*  
*Tacitus*



*Tacitus* also, and *Suetonius*, and *Josephus* assure us of the same thing; namely, that it was an antient and constant opinion over all the East, founded upon the Sacred Writings in the custody of their priests, that, at that time, a mighty Prince should be born in *Judæa*, who should rule the whole world; exactly agreeing with *Daniel's* prophecy of the *Messiah*: and there was given him dominion, and glory, and a kingdom, that all people, and nations, and languages shall serve him.

From hence we may observe these three things; First, that some remarkable prophecies concerning the *Messiah* had exactly determined his coming to this time; such as those of *Shiloh*, and *Daniel's* seventy weeks—otherwise, this general expectation is impossible to be accounted for.

Secondly, that men were, by this means, prepared and enabled to examine,

amine, more nicely and critically, into the character of any person, who should take upon him to be their Redeemer, at that time; whether it exactly answered the accounts given of the *Messiah*, in their prophetic writings.

And, Thirdly, it is remarkable, that this very expectation was the accomplishment of one signal prophecy concerning the *Messiah*, who, by the prophet *Haggai*, was styled *the desire of all nations*: God therefore sent him into the world, at a time when there was an universal expectation of him raised in the minds of men; *I will shake all nations* (saith the prophet, chap. ii.) *and the desire of all nations shall come, and I will fill this house* (that is, the temple) *with glory, saith the Lord; the glory of this latter house shall be greater than the glory of the former, saith the Lord of hosts.*

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In the next place, it is worth our observation, that, as the splendor of power and empire, and all the refinements of luxury and wealth, were then at their height, so also was vice, their constant and almost inseparable attendant.

Hence it is, that we find both the *Roman* poets and historians every-where complaining of the great corruption of manners then reigning, and the general degeneracy from the virtue and integrity of their forefathers.—And, that it was no better with the *Jews*, we may learn from the whole tenor of the Gospel: our blessed *Saviour*, upon all occasions, is remarkably severe upon the signal depravity of the *Jews* at that time; nay, upon the depravity even of the *Scribes* and *Pharisees*, the teachers and most exemplary observers of the law, which they had now miserably abused



bused and perverted by their corrupt glosses and comments, accommodated to their own vicious and scandalous lives.—And *Josephus* declares, that that generation were even more corrupt and abandoned than *Sodom*.

Upon this three things are worthy our observation :

First, that nothing less than a teacher sent from heaven, and armed with divine authority and miraculous power, was sufficient to undertake the reformation of so wicked and degenerate a world.

Secondly, that whereas it is objected to religion, that it is the contrivance of state policy ; it is remarkable, that the most politic age of the whole world (and such *Tiberius's*, in whose reign *Christ* published his doctrine, is allowed to be) is branded by all historians as the most wicked and profligate age that ever

ever was known, and consequently was, in the wisdom of God, judged to stand in greatest need of reformation; and that religion, by which the Almighty thought necessary to amend it, was so far from making any part of the politics then, or even now, in esteem, that it was, and is, in direct contradiction to all the schemes and artifices of human policy that ever prevailed, from the foundation of the world to this day.

And, Thirdly, it is remarkable, that whereas learning and human wisdom were then at the height, and yet the world was not in the least bettered by that wisdom, but, quite otherwise, their morals seemed to have degenerated, as their knowledge improved; from hence we may learn, that the best abilities, barely human, are utterly insufficient to guide men in the ways  
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of virtue and duty—at least to guard them in those ways ; to give sanction and authority to the most refined and exalted precepts of morality :—and therefore God sent his Son into the world, at this time, to convince men of the necessity of supernatural sanctions, and a teacher more than human.

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of virtue and duty—at least to  
claim them in those ways? to give  
sanction and authority to the moral  
restraints and claims of the  
religion—and the *Golden Rule*—  
to give them the weight of the  
conscience of the world?  
of spiritual and temporal  
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## S E R M O N VI.

Preached in St. Anne's, Dublin, on  
*Christmas day, 1761:*

Shewing that our blessed Saviour  
*Jesus Christ* was sent into the  
World in the most critical Pe-  
riod, for amending it, for evi-  
dencing the Truth of his Doc-  
trine, and conveying that Evi-  
dence to all future Ages.

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*Galatians, Chap. iv. Part of Ver. 4.*

*But, when the fulness of time was  
come, God sent forth his Son, made  
of a woman.*

I N a former discourse upon these  
words, I proposed to consider  
that objection made to the Christian  
religion, on account of our blessed

Saviour's coming so late into the world, by shewing that many characters, peculiar to this time, had very remarkably pointed it out, as the fittest period for attaining and accomplishing those ends proposed by Almighty God in sending a Saviour into the world.

Another thing very remarkable of the time of *Christ's* appearance upon earth is the state of religion at that time, which stood thus:

The Heathens of more note and higher condition were, almost all, avowed and proud *Epicureans*; that is, in other words, conceited men, of no religion; professed libertines, both in principle and practice; and consequently utter enemies to every thing that should lay the least restraint upon their appetites and passions.

The Heathens of lower condition were, in the other extreme, remarkably bigotted to their several superstitions



stitutions and idolatries, as the *Jews* were to the ceremonies of their law; so that as, on the one hand, nothing could be more difficult than to introduce a new and refined system of principles, both of belief and practice, in opposition to avowed scepticism and libertinism; so, on the other, nothing could be more difficult than to extirpate those strong prejudices and superstitions, which had taken such deep root in the hearts of devoted bigots and determined zealots; to withdraw men from a belief to which they were so zealously affected, by introducing a new, but a contrary religion: neither could any thing be more dangerous, than to attempt it; since (from the nature of the thing) the least offer, that way, must needs give the greatest offence, as in reality it did; and the experiment was not only dangerous, but fatal to those that undertook it: but then, if, be-

sides all this, the religion you would introduce do not only contradict the favourite opinions and inveterate prejudices of men, but likewise their indulged passions and darling pleasures, what can you then expect but to have the power and aversion of the whole world united against you, as one man? And this was exactly the case of Christianity, and those that first introduced it:—it came into the world, in opposition to the passions, and prejudices, and persuasions of all mankind; at a time too when they were most tenacious of these persuasions, and at an age wherein, as I told you before, learning was at the highest pitch, both among the *Jews* and *Gentiles*, that it ever arrived to, since the creation.—The necessary and undeniable consequence from all this must be, that, since the foundation of the world, mankind were never less disposed, than at that time, to receive a new religion,

religion, nor never better able to defend their old.

Had Christianity, therefore, been liable to the least imputation of imposture, it is impossible, that, in such an age as that, it could have escaped a full detection, or ever been able to have borne up against the united power, and learning, and malice of mankind; such inquisitive heads and piercing wits as were then in the world, the *Gentile* philosophers on one hand, and the *Jewish* rabbins on the other, if it had a weak side, would certainly have found it out; they would have sifted it to the bottom, dived into its deepest secrets, and unravelled and laid open the whole delusion; and, when that was done, surely the prejudiced world would have crushed it after such a manner, that it should never more have appeared, to controul their darling inclinations, or disturb their quiet.—Certainly, then,



we must, of necessity, allow that to be true, which the united power, and prejudice, and hatred, and interest, and learning, and sophistry, and subtilty of the whole world could not prove to be false; — especially at a time when such proof could have been very easily made, and would have been very greedily received, if there had been any room or colour for it.

Imposture is the natural growth of a dark age and ignorant climate; and the delusive and false glares of pretended revelation can shine only in deserts and darkness; they disclaim all manner of scrutiny and dispute; they sicken at the light, and die like false fires before the beams of the sun. — Thus *Mahomet* must chuse the wilds of *Arabia*; wherein to broach his imposture; he must strictly forbid all inquiry or debate about it; he must soothe the darling pleasures and passions of men,

and

and he must do this in an age when the people of the place are so ignorant, that they can neither write nor read; and so far from being bigotted to any religion, that they are well nigh destitute of all; and that not from speculative refinement, but downright stupidity; and we are very sufficiently assured that the errors of Popery made their way into the world after the same manner.

But the truth of our holy religion is such, in its purity, that it boldly offereth itself to the most severe trial; and, by the wise appointment of Almighty God, chose the wisest and most discerning age of the world wherein to make its appearance, on purpose to undergo that trial, that so it might the better be proved and justified thereby. — And justified it was; for, although it were opposed by the utmost violence of the prejudiced world, and though it were thoroughly

roughly examined and diligently searched into by the acuteſt and ſubtleſt wits of thoſe ages, in which it firſt appeared, yet it came forth like gold from the furnace, pure and undiminished; neither diſgraced by dross, nor depreſiated by alloy of any kind; nor could the united ſubtilty and malice of mankind ever diſcover the leaſt fraud or flaw in it. By the divine force of its native integrity, it triumphed over all manner of oppoſition; and the vanquiſhed world were obliged, at laſt, to bow before the light and majeſty of that evidence, which carried with it ſuch clear characters, and ſuch manifeſt impreſſions of the divinity.

I proceed now to conſider ſome other characters of this time;—and the firſt that I ſhall mention is this:

That the *Greek* literature had now ſpread itſelf over the face of the  
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the earth. It began in *Asia* with the *Greek* colonies settled there, and extended itself over the East, with *Alexander's* conquests; and was established in the empires settled by his successors in *Asia* and *Egypt*. And, as it was the learned language of the world, which contained all the treasures of worldly science, it quickly became the fashionable language at *Rome*, the mistress of the world, as arts and sciences gained ground amongst them.—And from thence it as naturally diffused itself throughout the empire; the Scriptures of the Old Testament had long since been translated into that language, whether at *Ptolomy's* desire and by public authority (as I verily believe it was) or merely for the private use of the *Hellenistic Jews*, mattereth not greatly. However that may be, there is little doubt to be made, that, in an age of such learning, and so great curiosity, these

theſe books were in the hands of the curious and the learned, all over the earth; and there is plain proof that they were, inasmuch as the beſt poets of that age are found to tranſlate from them, as the beſt law-givers had done long before. Nay, I think nothing can be more evident, from the very nature of the thing.

I ſhall clear this by a very familiar inſtance:

If the laws, learning, and religion of the *Samoeids*, or *Hottentots*, were in *Engliſh* at this day, is there any man of common learning and curioſity, nay, is there any man of common ſenſe, who underſtood *Engliſh*, that would not read and examine them? And can we doubt, whether a people of ſo ſingular a character as the *Jews*, and at the ſame time ſo conſiderable as they now were, could not as ſtrongly excite the curioſity of all the world about them, as ſuch poor and abject

ject nations, as the *Samoeids* and *Hottentots*, now would our's? to learn their laws, their institutions, their politics; and, above all, the ground of that singular vanity, which swelled them into an opinion of their being greater favourites of Heaven than other men.

Another character of the time of our blessed Saviour's coming into the world (before hinted at) is this: That it was the age of most philosophic inquiry, and best historical faith, from the foundation of the world to that time.

Had our blessed Saviour come into the world many centuries sooner, the whole world was dark and ignorant; and it were easy to object that mankind, in such a state of ignorance, were easily imposed upon: whereas these objections have no place, in an age remarkably philosophic and enlightened; a circumstance which gives great advantage  
to



to any truth introduced and established in the world, in opposition to the opinions and practices then prevailing in it.

More than this, philosophical speculations and inquiries naturally tend to open and enlarge the understanding, and were, at this time, of great use to prepare the minds of men for the reception of those refinements in religion and virtue, which the Christian religion introduced into the world.

Add to all this, that this is the age of the best historical truth and credit.

Had our blessed Saviour come some centuries sooner, the world was then dark, ignorant, and fabulous.

Had the history of so extraordinary a life, as that of *Jesus*, been the work of that age, it would have been easy to urge, that the fabulous age was not yet at an end: this is certain,

certain, that, as there were then no *Roman* historians, we could have no account of him from any but *Greek* historians, and we should then have had his life and his miracles numbered among the *Greek* fables, *a quicquid Græcia mendax audet in historiis.*

Had our blessed Saviour come into the world but one century sooner, there was then no universal empire; there was then no universal language; there was then no universal learning; the books of the Old Testament were not in every one's hands; the appeals to them by the apostles and evangelists could not be understood, and consequently could ground no proof; nor were the *Jews* then so considerable, as that they and their religion and laws (then not generally known) should be the subjects of universal curiosity.

And this leads me to consider another character of the time of *Christ's* coming

coming into the world; and that is that the *Jews* were now universally known, diffused over the face of the whole earth, and now at the height of their grandeur.

It is true, as a nation, I mean, with regard to national power, they were, doubtless, more considerable in the days of *David* and *Solomon*; but then they were considerable only to their nearer neighbours; regions more remote, knew less of them, except what reports the fame of *Solomon's* amazing wealth and wisdom had diffused over the face of the earth, and his most extensive commerce had established; the subsequent intercourse of remote regions being then less open and extensive; besides, the *Jews* had, since that, been carried captives into different parts of the earth, and remarkably distinguished, in their captivity, by the favours of *Nebuchadnezzar*, *Cyrus*, *Darius*, and *Artaxerxes*; and, after their



their return, by *Alexander the Great*, *Demetrius*, and the *Ptolomy's*.

They had contended long with *Antiochus* and the *Ptolomy's*, and at length established their state, in opposition to them; and *Herod*, their King, was in eminent favour with the greatest of the *Romans*.

Their city and temple were now rebuilt, with a magnificence which nothing in all the East could rival; they had now another famous temple in *Egypt*; and they had numerous synagogues in every city of *Asia*, and were become so very populous at *Rome*, that their Sabbath assemblies were for some time suppressed by an imperial edict, on account of the infinite crouds which thronged and choaked the streets on those occasions.

This people, then, were now more known, and more numerous, in every region of the earth, than any other whatsoever: our blessed

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Saviour

Saviour constantly resorted to *Jerusalem*, preached, and wrought his miracles, at the great solemn assemblies, in the presence of an infinite multitude of *Jews* and proselytes, who resorted thither on those occasions.

He was crucified and rose from the dead at the passover, and the gift of tongues was conferred on his disciples at the ensuing Pentecost; by which means his fame was soon diffused, and his miracles attested over the face of the earth. Had he appeared at any preceding period, the *Jews* were less known, less considerable, or more confined to their own country, or at war with their neighbours.

The apostles, indeed, might have preached to mankind, at any time, by the benefit of the gift of tongues; but they could bring no convincing proofs of their *Messiah* from the books of the Old Testament, when those

those books were unknown, or confined to one or two languages little understood;—besides this, had they been sent upon their missions in any preceding period, the intercourse of nations was shut up, and their commerce either precarious or interrupted. Both these were now opened, by an universal empire, universal peace, and universal language.

The doctrines of *Jesus* could, now, be easily carried into every region of the earth; the apostles had now no interruption in their travels through the earth, or difficulty in their appeals to the Scriptures. They might now say, in every city, and before every great assembly of the then known world, as *Paul* did at *Cæsarea*, in the presence of *Festus*, King *Agrippa*, *Bernice*, the chief captains, and principal men of the city:—*I am persuaded that none of these things*



*are bidden from you, for these things were not done in a corner. — These things were transacted in the most confessedly renowned and most universally known and celebrated city of all the earth; a city which was as a central point to the then known world; and consequently the communication of any truth, or transaction from thence, to all other parts, easier and shorter.*

*Three thousand men, from the different regions of the earth, were made converts to Christianity, in this city, in one day, by the miraculous effusion of the Holy Ghost upon the disciples; these were eye and ear witnesses of the miraculous power and preaching of the apostles, in every known country under heaven; which could not have been, either in any preceding, or in any subsequent century, and, consequently, now was the fulness of time.*

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In one word, our blessed Saviour appeared in that place and in that period of time best fitted for trying, examining, proving, and conveying his doctrines to all parts of the world, and all succeeding ages and generations.

The last reason I shall mention, why the coming of our blessed Saviour into the world was so long delayed, was in order to justify the conduct of God in his dispensations to mankind, and to enable us to answer that cavil, so often urged against the Christian dispensation, where was the necessity of this extraordinary step? Could nothing less than the Son of God inform and instruct the world, and redeem mankind from their sins?

The answer to this is now obvious, all other methods of effecting this had been tried, and all found ineffectual.

When the preaching of *Noah*, and his threatenings of impending vengeance, for an hundred years together, were found utterly ineffectual for the amendment of the old world, God destroyed it by a flood.

When the length of days, and the experience of ages, which should have taught the advantages of virtue, and the folly, and deformity, and various evils of vice and irreligion, were found only to inspire mankind with confidence and security in sinning, God contracted their lives from period to period, untill he reduced them to the present pittance.

When the example and influence of *Noah*, and the recent judgments of God upon the earth, could not restrain his sons from the vanity and evil tendencies of building the city and tower of *Babel*, God at once, by a signal interposition, confounded their language and their devices.

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The terror of this judgment could scarce be abated, before the signal blessings of God upon *Abraham*, and judgment upon *Sodom*, became an open monition and document to mankind of the divine favour and protection to piety, and vengeance upon wickedness.

When *Egypt* began to grow eminent over the other empires of the earth, God signally interposed for the manifestation of the true religion, by the ministry of *Joseph*; from whom there is good reason to believe that they learnt, or were renewed at least, in the worship of the true God, and the duties they owed him.

When this nation became corrupt, through length of time, and the increase of power and wealth, God again interposed for the deliverance of his people from amongst them, with a mighty power, and a stretched-out arm, to the terror

of the whole world, and the manifestation of his more immediate providence and dominion over the affairs of men.

From this time, his peculiar people subsisted, in the midst of their enemies, by little less than a series of miracles, until they became, under *David* and *Salomon*, the greatest empire of the earth; and then the lustre and glory of the true religion was amply exhibited to the whole world around them.

As they became corrupt, the *Egyptian* monarchy prevailed, and principally upon their ruins. As they repented, they were redeemed; and, as they returned to their corruptions, they were gradually and proportionably oppressed by the succeeding monarchies; but still in each of these, in the *Egyptian*, *Assyrian*, *Babylonian*, *Persian*, and *Grecian*, God signally interposed, by prophets, by miracles, by visions, and

and by signal judgments from heaven, for the manifestation of the true religion; and, last of all, when all these mercies, miracles, judgments, deliverances, monitions, and visions failed, and were found ineffectual; when the wisest and the divinest poets failed; when law-givers, politicians, philosophers, and prophets proved insufficient for the instruction and amendment of the world; the divine wisdom once more interposed, by sending down the Son of God from heaven.

From all these reasons united, I hope it is clearly evident, that this was the fittest season, that this was *the fulness of time*, for sending a Saviour into the world.—To him, with the Father and the Holy Ghost, be all honour and glory, from henceforth for evermore.

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and by signal distinction from her-  
true religion; and that of all other  
all their merits, and their just  
merits, deliverance from them, and

## SERMON VII.

Under this Head, Laws are de-  
scribed, as well as the Spirit, and  
preached in the College of Dublin.

in the Chapter, Chap. 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44, 45, 46, 47, 48, 49, 50, 51, 52, 53, 54, 55, 56, 57, 58, 59, 60, 61, 62, 63, 64, 65, 66, 67, 68, 69, 70, 71, 72, 73, 74, 75, 76, 77, 78, 79, 80, 81, 82, 83, 84, 85, 86, 87, 88, 89, 90, 91, 92, 93, 94, 95, 96, 97, 98, 99, 100, 101, 102, 103, 104, 105, 106, 107, 108, 109, 110, 111, 112, 113, 114, 115, 116, 117, 118, 119, 120, 121, 122, 123, 124, 125, 126, 127, 128, 129, 130, 131, 132, 133, 134, 135, 136, 137, 138, 139, 140, 141, 142, 143, 144, 145, 146, 147, 148, 149, 150, 151, 152, 153, 154, 155, 156, 157, 158, 159, 160, 161, 162, 163, 164, 165, 166, 167, 168, 169, 170, 171, 172, 173, 174, 175, 176, 177, 178, 179, 180, 181, 182, 183, 184, 185, 186, 187, 188, 189, 190, 191, 192, 193, 194, 195, 196, 197, 198, 199, 200, 201, 202, 203, 204, 205, 206, 207, 208, 209, 210, 211, 212, 213, 214, 215, 216, 217, 218, 219, 220, 221, 222, 223, 224, 225, 226, 227, 228, 229, 230, 231, 232, 233, 234, 235, 236, 237, 238, 239, 240, 241, 242, 243, 244, 245, 246, 247, 248, 249, 250, 251, 252, 253, 254, 255, 256, 257, 258, 259, 260, 261, 262, 263, 264, 265, 266, 267, 268, 269, 270, 271, 272, 273, 274, 275, 276, 277, 278, 279, 280, 281, 282, 283, 284, 285, 286, 287, 288, 289, 290, 291, 292, 293, 294, 295, 296, 297, 298, 299, 300, 301, 302, 303, 304, 305, 306, 307, 308, 309, 310, 311, 312, 313, 314, 315, 316, 317, 318, 319, 320, 321, 322, 323, 324, 325, 326, 327, 328, 329, 330, 331, 332, 333, 334, 335, 336, 337, 338, 339, 340, 341, 342, 343, 344, 345, 346, 347, 348, 349, 350, 351, 352, 353, 354, 355, 356, 357, 358, 359, 360, 361, 362, 363, 364, 365, 366, 367, 368, 369, 370, 371, 372, 373, 374, 375, 376, 377, 378, 379, 380, 381, 382, 383, 384, 385, 386, 387, 388, 389, 390, 391, 392, 393, 394, 395, 396, 397, 398, 399, 400, 401, 402, 403, 404, 405, 406, 407, 408, 409, 410, 411, 412, 413, 414, 415, 416, 417, 418, 419, 420, 421, 422, 423, 424, 425, 426, 427, 428, 429, 430, 431, 432, 433, 434, 435, 436, 437, 438, 439, 440, 441, 442, 443, 444, 445, 446, 447, 448, 449, 450, 451, 452, 453, 454, 455, 456, 457, 458, 459, 460, 461, 462, 463, 464, 465, 466, 467, 468, 469, 470, 471, 472, 473, 474, 475, 476, 477, 478, 479, 480, 481, 482, 483, 484, 485, 486, 487, 488, 489, 490, 491, 492, 493, 494, 495, 496, 497, 498, 499, 500, 501, 502, 503, 504, 505, 506, 507, 508, 509, 510, 511, 512, 513, 514, 515, 516, 517, 518, 519, 520, 521, 522, 523, 524, 525, 526, 527, 528, 529, 530, 531, 532, 533, 534, 535, 536, 537, 538, 539, 540, 541, 542, 543, 544, 545, 546, 547, 548, 549, 550, 551, 552, 553, 554, 555, 556, 557, 558, 559, 560, 561, 562, 563, 564, 565, 566, 567, 568, 569, 570, 571, 572, 573, 574, 575, 576, 577, 578, 579, 580, 581, 582, 583, 584, 585, 586, 587, 588, 589, 590, 591, 592, 593, 594, 595, 596, 597, 598, 599, 600, 601, 602, 603, 604, 605, 606, 607, 608, 609, 610, 611, 612, 613, 614, 615, 616, 617, 618, 619, 620, 621, 622, 623, 624, 625, 626, 627, 628, 629, 630, 631, 632, 633, 634, 635, 636, 637, 638, 639, 640, 641, 642, 643, 644, 645, 646, 647, 648, 649, 650, 651, 652, 653, 654, 655, 656, 657, 658, 659, 660, 661, 662, 663, 664, 665, 666, 667, 668, 669, 670, 671, 672, 673, 674, 675, 676, 677, 678, 679, 680, 681, 682, 683, 684, 685, 686, 687, 688, 689, 690, 691, 692, 693, 694, 695, 696, 697, 698, 699, 700, 701, 702, 703, 704, 705, 706, 707, 708, 709, 710, 711, 712, 713, 714, 715, 716, 717, 718, 719, 720, 721, 722, 723, 724, 725, 726, 727, 728, 729, 730, 731, 732, 733, 734, 735, 736, 737, 738, 739, 740, 741, 742, 743, 744, 745, 746, 747, 748, 749, 750, 751, 752, 753, 754, 755, 756, 757, 758, 759, 760, 761, 762, 763, 764, 765, 766, 767, 768, 769, 770, 771, 772, 773, 774, 775, 776, 777, 778, 779, 780, 781, 782, 783, 784, 785, 786, 787, 788, 789, 790, 791, 792, 793, 794, 795, 796, 797, 798, 799, 800, 801, 802, 803, 804, 805, 806, 807, 808, 809, 810, 811, 812, 813, 814, 815, 816, 817, 818, 819, 820, 821, 822, 823, 824, 825, 826, 827, 828, 829, 830, 831, 832, 833, 834, 835, 836, 837, 838, 839, 840, 841, 842, 843, 844, 845, 846, 847, 848, 849, 850, 851, 852, 853, 854, 855, 856, 857, 858, 859, 860, 861, 862, 863, 864, 865, 866, 867, 868, 869, 870, 871, 872, 873, 874, 875, 876, 877, 878, 879, 880, 881, 882, 883, 884, 885, 886, 887, 888, 889, 890, 891, 892, 893, 894, 895, 896, 897, 898, 899, 900, 901, 902, 903, 904, 905, 906, 907, 908, 909, 910, 911, 912, 913, 914, 915, 916, 917, 918, 919, 920, 921, 922, 923, 924, 925, 926, 927, 928, 929, 930, 931, 932, 933, 934, 935, 936, 937, 938, 939, 940, 941, 942, 943, 944, 945, 946, 947, 948, 949, 950, 951, 952, 953, 954, 955, 956, 957, 958, 959, 960, 961, 962, 963, 964, 965, 966, 967, 968, 969, 970, 971, 972, 973, 974, 975, 976, 977, 978, 979, 980, 981, 982, 983, 984, 985, 986, 987, 988, 989, 990, 991, 992, 993, 994, 995, 996, 997, 998, 999, 1000.

**U**NDER this command we are  
prohibited to injure our neigh-  
bour in his property, however this  
be done; whether by secret fraud,  
or open violence; whether by de-  
priving him of what he is possessed  
of, or withholding what he hath a  
right to. This is the negative sense  
of the precept; and, since we are  
not to make prey of other men's  
properties

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## S E R M O N VII.

Under this Head our Laws are censured, as well as the *Spartan*.

Preached in the College of *Dublin*.

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*Exodus*, Chap. xx. Ver. 15.

*Thou shalt not steal.*

**U**NDER this command we are prohibited to injure our neighbour in his property, however this be done ; whether by secret fraud, or open violence ; whether by depriving him of what he is possessed of, or with-holding what he hath a right to. This is the negative sense of the precept ; and, since we are not to make prey of other men's properties,

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properties, and yet cannot subsist  
without a competent portion of the  
good things of life; it is evident  
that this precept, which expressly  
prohibits theft, doth virtually com-  
mand industry: that, by it, we are  
enjoined to take proper measures of  
acquiring to ourselves such a portion  
of the good things of this world, as  
may support us, without invading the  
rights of others: and this is the po-  
sitive precept implied in the prohi-  
bition before us.—And these two  
points I shall, as well as I am able,  
discuss in their order.

And First, we are not to invade  
the property of others.—The reason  
of establishing property in the world  
was, that every man might be en-  
couraged to diligence and industry  
in acquiring the conveniencies of  
life, from an assurance of reaping  
and enjoying the fruits of his labours  
as long as he lived, and leaving the  
rest of his substance to his children;

now



now this end could never be answered, or rather would be utterly defeated, if it were allowable to any other to invade his acquisitions, and to reap where he had not sown; because this would be the greatest discouragement to honest industry, and the greatest temptation to sloth, and fraud, and violence.

But here a question naturally ariseth:—Suppose another should invade my property, how far is he punishable, and how far am I allowed to prosecute the offence?

To this I answer, —First, that, if he invade my property, through mere unavoidable necessity, he is not punishable, because not blamable: suppose a man, for instance, reduced, through no fault of his own, to all the distress of hunger, and, at the same time, destitute of means whereby to purchase food; suppose him incapable of earning it by labour, or suppose the profit of

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that labour, together with all ear-  
nest intreaty of relief, either re-  
fused or insufficient; is he, in that  
case, to starve? No, certainly; he  
is to invade the first man's property  
that falls in his way, for relief.  
And he hath a right to do so: and  
the reason is evident, because he is,  
in that case, an exception to all the  
reasons for which property was in-  
troduced and established in the  
world.

My brethren, property was esta-  
blished to encourage industry, to  
prevent and to punish sloth.—It was  
introduced to encourage industry,  
but not to oppress it; it was intro-  
duced to prevent sloth, but not to  
punish incapacity: and much less  
was it introduced to encourage cru-  
elty, or to give one man a right of  
starving another to death! And  
therefore, where a man is either in-  
capable of labouring for subsistence,  
or is refused the fruits of his labour,  
or

or cannot be employed, in all these cases, he hath a right to be sub-

But suppose this not the case—  
Suppose a man able and idle; suppose him to invade my property, either through villainy or avarice; how far is he punishable?

To this I answer, that I know no rule of reason, or law of man, half so righteous, or so equitable as the decisions of the divine law, in this case, as they are laid down in the xxiid chapter of *Exodus*, where it is decreed, that, if a man steal an ox or a sheep, and kill it, or sell it, *he shall restore five oxen for an ox, and four sheep for a sheep.* The reasons of the disproportion seem to be, first, because the theft of oxen is easier, and therefore should be more discouraged; and, secondly, because they are a more useful and valuable creature.—But, if the theft be found in his hand, *he shall restore only*



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*only double*: where the ox was sold or slain, there the expence and trouble of prosecution and proof must be supposed greater, and consequently so should the restitution.

But suppose a man not capable of making restitution, — then saith the law of God, *he shall be sold for his theft*. He shall be sold, that the injury may be repaired from his sale; and, for my part, I know no law of God or reason, that forbids a thief to be sold, any more than a *Guinea* slave in this age, or a *Roman* or *Greek* slave antiently; but, if this may not be done, let public work-houses be erected, and let the thief labour in them, until he repay four-fold, by the sweat of his brow.

And here I cannot help observing with concern, that the laws of our land, in the case of theft, are the most unrighteous and unequitable that can be imagined.

Here,

Here, the stealing of a cow, or a sheep, is death by the law! now, what can be more unrighteous, or absurd, than that the life of a man should be estimated by that of a cow or a sheep? And, besides this, it is putting the highest and the lowest guilt upon a monstrous foot of equality; a man must go to the gallows for stealing a sheep, and he can only go thither for murder, and with this advantage; that he hath sometimes a better chance of escaping in the latter case; is not this reviving all the cruelty and iniquity of *Draco's* laws, where death was the punishment of the lowest crimes as well as of the highest?—And, after all, when the thief is executed, what reparation is made to the sufferer? None at all; if the felon had any property, it is forfeited to the crown, and the poor man that is defrauded, must be at the expence and trouble of prosecution.—And

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for the injury, instead of being repaired, is aggravated; and, if he should enter into any measures to have his damages repaired out of the felon's substance, though perhaps his whole being and livelihood in the world depended upon it, this is called compounding of felony, and is interpreted into one of the most heinous and punishable offences he can be guilty of in the society!

Whereas, if the offender were either sold into another country, where he was bound to labour, and his price, or a proper part of it, paid to the person injured by him; or were confined to labour at home, in such manner as that the profits of his labour might be applied to repay the damages he did; the injury might then be repaired, and a vagrant, that stole from sloth and idleness, being forced to hard labour for a season, would naturally acquire



quire a habit of honest industry, and so, instead of being cut off from the commonwealth as a nuisance, might be preserved to it as a profitable member! Now all this folly, and absurdity, and iniquity arises entirely from the legislature's neglecting to form and build itself up on the laws of God; an omission which it is astonishing how any Christian society could be guilty of! and this brings me to the next point implied in the prohibition of theft; to wit, the duty of exerting an honest industry in some lawful occupation.

And, as there is, in truth, no duty of more universal importance to mankind than this? there is none which ought to be more early or carefully inculcated into the minds of youth! for, as the peace and well-being of society is greatly concerned in it, it is, at the same time, the real interest of every private per-

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son; and therefore, in order to attain so desirable an end, nothing is more necessary than to inspire the minds of young people with an early sense of strict justice, and the duty of a religious abstinence from the rights of others; because this will urge them, indeed, will lay them under a necessity of acquiring early habits of industry in some honest and useful profession; whereby they may provide a proper support, independent of others; for, as an honest industry is always well rewarded, and is much happier in its end than fraud and violence, so is it, in truth, much more pleasant in its practice; because it is attended with the delightfullest of all passions, an honest hope! and the fruits of it, solid joy and the applause of a good conscience: whereas the contrary vices are ever haunted with dread and distrust, danger and guilt, and an evil conscience.

And

And here, my brethren, I must observe to you, that every man that is a true and sincere friend to honest industry, is bound in conscience to repress and drive out that spirit of vagrant beggary, which is at once the reproach and the ruin of our nation. A vagrant beggar is a wretch bred up in idleness, and all the evil arts consequent to it, lying, leudness, drunkenness, theft, robberies, and villainy of every kind and character! and what is it to give the least countenance to such monsters, but to become patrons to every vice, and every abomination that curses the world!—What is it but to rob and to oppress the native and real poor, upon whose spoils they subsist!

But you will ask, Who countenances any such? I answer, not the widow, the orphan, and the cottager, who are threatened, and frightened, and forced to feed them; but the magistrates, whose duty it is



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to repress and punish them, and who will be severely accountable, at the last day, for their remissness in a point of such infinite importance to their country, to virtue, to honesty, and to industry! It is astonishing, therefore, how so wise a man as *Lycurgus* could encourage, or even allow, so base an act as theft, in the institution of his youth;—a practice so directly against the law of reason, and so destructive of the well-being of mankind! And, whereas he would have it attended with hardiness and industry, it is evident, that he only contrived to make it so much the more pernicious and detestable, without its answering any one useful or desirable end in life; because equal industry, in an honest and laudable pursuit, will ever be more surely and universally successful, than in any that are dishonest and unworthy! forasmuch, as in the first, you  
have

have the good wishes and good offices of all mankind in your favour, together with all the incitements of a generous and a good mind, and all these under the care and protection of the divine providence! whereas, in the latter, you have all these directly against you.

Besides, that industry is in itself neither amiable nor virtuous, but is so, only from the ends it aimeth at, and the means it maketh use of, in order to those ends.—Industry in an evil art, or to a wicked purpose, is a hellish principle! and is far from being amiable, even where it is in most perfection, in the devil! So far from being amiable, that it is, in truth, horrid and detestable, even in the vilest and worst of beings! and therefore, to give the least shew of encouragement to it, in any evil act, or to any evil purpose, is equally impolitic and impious.—For this reason, as the minds of youth are

sprightly and active, and eager to be employed, there is no duty more incumbent upon parents, nor any thing more the interest of mankind, than that they should have a right turn to honest industry, from the beginning; and as they should be early urged and habituated to every thing that is honest and amiable in life, by all the motives of religion, and honour, and affluence; so likewise should they be impressed with an early abhorrence of all fraud and iniquity in their dealings; and, in order to do this, at least, for the benefit of such as are yet uninstructed, or untainted in this point, I shall lay before you some of those several kinds of frauds and villainies in the dealings of men which deserve the imputation of theft, together with the guilt and evil of each kind.

And the first kind of theft that I shall mention is sacrilege.—Now  
sacrilege



sacrilege is defrauding God of what he himself hath appropriated to his own use, or what others have dedicated to his service.—To withhold, or alienate, any part of things so set apart to sacred use, and apply them to secular and profane purposes, is, strictly and properly speaking, robbing of God; a height of impiety, which it is amazing how the most daring sinner could possibly harden himself into!—*Will a man rob God* (saith the prophet) *a man rob God!* a sin so daring and desperate, that the very question is enough to abash the most profligate impiety!—A worm of the earth, the creature of his breath, dare to invade the rights of his Creator and his King!—the sovereign Majesty of heaven and earth! to whom he oweth his being, and all the blessings that attend it! To rob him who fashioned that very hand, that dares to stretch itself out against his Maker!

ker! — And yet there have been such monsters of iniquity in the world, and yet are! — *Yet ye have robbed me, saith the Lord, by his prophet Malachi! but ye say, Wherein have we robbed thee? In tythes and offerings. Ye are cursed with a curse; for ye have robbed me, this whole nation!* — To survey the state of this kingdom, one would imagine this truth and this vengeance directly pronounced upon it!

Not to insist upon the thousand evil arts made use of to defraud and distress the clergy of the established church in their just dues, to consider the tythes in the hands of laymen who have no colour of equitable right to them, and the ministers of God stripped of them! and, in many places, in a forlorn distressed condition, for want of them! and, what is yet worse, the people of God (at least as far as lies in the impropriator) by this means entirely destitute of

of a minister, to attend upon the altar, or conduct them in the ways of salvation! And, if any man doubt whether this curse of God, pronounced by his prophet, pursues this robbery of the tythes, let him examine how it is in fact. Let him shew how many families of either nation have been blessed and flourishing under it, to the third and fourth generation!—Or, what is much easier, let him shew how many families of either nation have not been in that space gradually eaten out, and in the end exhausted under them!\*

And yet, notwithstanding all this, to consider societies of men, at this day, combining to deprive the ministers of God of their legal rights, their legal, their hereditary, their divine rights! that is, in truth, combining to stop the progress of truth and true religion

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\* See Sir Henry Spelman's treatise *de non temerandis ecclesiis*.



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amongst them! is surely a lamentable contemplation! How far such a nation is concerned in the sin of sacrilege, and sunk under the curse due to it, I submit to the serious reflections of all those who have no bias upon their judgments in this point, nor interests to sway their consciences, separate from the interests of religion and truth.

I am sensible with how much prejudice and disadvantage doctrines of this kind are delivered and heard from the pulpit; but, God be praised, there are yet, among the ministers of God, men superior to such low and fordid suspicions! there are yet, among the men of God, who are not the servants of Mammon! who have not made *gold their God, nor the fine gold their confidence!* who are not enriched by tythes, nor desirous to be enriched by them! And therefore I shall not scruple to pronounce, that he that defrauds an honest and a conscientious clergyman

man of his honest and lawful dues, robs the fair trader, the industrious labourer, the decayed house-keeper, the helpless widow, and the distressed orphan, as much, and perhaps more, than he robs the minister of God!—And, if any man can quiet his conscience, and harden himself into security under such a conduct, God, in his infinite mercy, redeem him from so desperate a state; as I premised, in the beginning of this discourse, that the prohibition in the text forbade the injuring our neighbour in his property, every injury done to him, except that by open force, may justly be comprehended under the character of theft, and therefore all the oppressions of power, under the characters of bargain and sale, come under this head; and, as these are too many even to be recounted, and much more to be censured, at this time, I shall mention only one, and that is the oppression

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oppression of griping landlords upon the poor tenants under their power. — They keep down the price of labour to the same poor pittance it stood in the days of their fathers; although they have raised their lands to double, nay to four times the value they let it at in those days; whereas the price of labour should, in all conscience, rise in proportion to the price of that land, by which the labourer is supported; — nay, what is worse than all this, — a poor labourer must pay four times the real, nay four times the raised value of the little spot he holds; and the reason given for it is, because he pays for it, not in money, but in work; — as if labour were a less real or valuable price for any thing than money. — Whereas, in truth, the sweat of the brow is the truest, the fullest, the severest price that can be paid for any thing in life. — It is the price which God himself  
made



made *Adam* pay for the first forfeiture of his life! And shall that be deemed an insufficient price for a pittance of land, which God himself deemed sufficient for the forfeit of life? And hence it cometh to pass, that the commonalty of this kingdom are known and allowed to be the poorest, the most oppressed, the most miserable people upon the face of God's earth! And, surely, those that cause them to be so, are in the character of those cruel oppressors, which *Micah* crieth out against in the *iiid* chapter of his prophecies, and the 2d and 3d verses, *who pluck off the skin of the poor from off them, and their flesh from off their bones;—who also eat the flesh of my people, saith the Lord, and flay their skin from off them, and they break their bones, and chop them in pieces as for the pot, and as flesh within the caldron. I speak this to a generation of future landlords,*  
who

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who have yet some seeds of humanity and justice in their souls, that you do not suffer them to be killed and extirpated from your hearts, by the example of the evil world all around you; that you put on bowels of mercy, meekness, and long-suffering towards these your poor dependents.

O, my brethren, cultivate these godlike principles from all the force of philosophy, and all the motives of true religion; and to this end let me admonish you, as Christians, that the reformation of your country, particularly the redress of this great evil, and, in consequence of that, your own, and your relations happiness, lieth at your door; your God, your country, your education, and your conscience demand it of you; and, above all, the cries of the poor and the oppressed call aloud for it at your hands.

You

You are now heirs to great estates; *Job* was the possessor of much greater, and yet all his glory and grandeur forsook him, and left him naked, desolate, and distressed; and what was then his consolation and support?

Why, this only, that, in the fulness of his grandeur and glory, he delivered the poor that cried, and the fatherless, and him that had none to help him; the blessing of him that was ready to perish came upon him, and he caused the widow's heart to sing for joy; he was a father to the poor, he brake the jaws of the wicked, and plucked the spoil out of his teeth.

O, my brethren, these were *Job's* consolations in his afflictions; these were his glory, when all the grandeur of the world had forsaken him.

Was this the glory of *Job*, the glory of a great prince? It is the glory of

N

God;



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God; you have a great earthly prince, you have the great King of heaven and earth, for your pattern; and take heed that ye walk so, as that ye have him for an example.

*Be merciful, as your Father which is in heaven is merciful;—*laying up in store for yourselves a good foundation against the time to come, that ye may lay hold on eternal life,

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S E R-

## S E R M O N VIII.

The great Duty and Importance of  
a religious Fast.

In two Sermons, preached succeſſively in the ſame Church, in  
*London*, in Time of *Lent*.

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*Galatians*, Chap. v. Ver. 24.

*And they that are Chriſt's have crucified the fleſh with the affections and luſts.*

**T**HERE is not a more uſeful leſſon, either in religion, or life, than to get a maſtery of the appetites and paſſions. This hath ever been the fixed opinion of wiſe men in all ages, and the ſects of the

antient philosophers, who differed in almost every thing else, were perfectly agreed in this. Nor can it be denied that many wise and excellent precepts, for obtaining this mastery, are to be met with in the writings of the antients, together with many excellent observations upon the advantages of keeping the passions and appetites within their proper bounds, and the folly and evil of a contrary conduct. But then they are too general: they are like the dissertations of physicians upon the nature and quality of distempers, without descending to any particular medicines, or methods of cure.—They did not rightly consider, that most of the passions were founded in the body, and that the inordinacy of the appetite was, for the most part, owing to irregularity and tumult in the blood and spirits; and therefore, that the cure must begin where the disease was founded; consequently,



consequently, that the surest way to calm the mind was to temper and cool the body.

Indeed *Pythagoras*, of all the Heathens, seems to have been best acquainted with this secret, and therefore his wisdom is never enough to be admired, who, in laying down rules for the conduct of life, advises us to acquire habits of subduing all our appetites, but the belly first, as being that upon which the rest did, in a great measure, depend; and this, in all probability, was the great mystery of all that abstinence he enjoined.

From this consideration it is that the duties of abstinence and self-denial (however decried and despised in this libertine age) are plainly founded both in religion and prudence; for if a mastery of our appetites, if subduing their irregularities and excesses, be necessary to virtue and true piety, and those to

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the peace and happiness of this life, and to the favour of God, and the enjoyment of heaven in the next; and if abstinence and self-denial be necessary, in order to obtain that mastery; then is it evident that these do immediately become important duties, both in morality and religion. And hence it is, that we are commanded in the Scriptures (the noblest treasury of wisdom the world was ever blessed with) *to mortify our members which are upon earth—to keep under our bodies, and to bring them into subjection—to make no provision for the flesh to fulfil the lusts thereof; for they that walk after the flesh cannot please God, because the carnal mind is enmity with God.—* And again we are assured, that *the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; and these are contrary the one to the other, so that ye cannot do the things that ye would.* That is, reason and appetite are  
often

often in opposition to one another; and therefore, till you subdue the flesh, that is, till ye get the mastery of your appetites, *ye cannot do the things that ye would*; that is, ye cannot act agreeably to the dictates of your reason:—and soon after it followeth, *they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts.*

Now, by the affections and lusts of the flesh are meant all those excesses and irregularities of passion and appetite, that are productive of those evils which the apostle, in the foregoing verses, call the *works of the flesh*—such as *adultery, uncleanness, murders, strifes, drunkenness, &c.*

And the business of this discourse shall be to recommend and inculcate that duty of religion, whereby we may be assisted to subdue the irregularities above-mentioned, *viz.* the duty of a religious fast; which



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the institutions of the church, and the practice of the primitive Christians in the purest ages, call upon us to observe, in a more particular manner, at this time.

The reasons and advantages of this duty are very numerous; and I shall endeavour to lay them briefly before you in their full force.

And, first, a religious fast is of great use to subdue our unruly appetites and passions; for it is most certain, that, as the several passions produce fervor, and tumult, and disorder in the blood, so likewise heat and tumult in the blood do again, upon every occasion, produce passion and appetite in their corresponding degrees. It is true, the laws of union between the soul and body are not fully known to us; but this is beyond all doubt, that they affect each other mutually; and it is reasonable to think, that here also, as well as in other parts of nature,

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ture, action, and reaction are equal; that, as the mind acts upon the body, so the body acts upon the mind again. Besides, we certainly do know, that many vices are founded entirely in the body, such as intemperance and uncleanness of every kind; that they are the effects of heat and fulness, and therefore that abstinence will as certainly abate and lay them, as withdrawing fuel from a fire will cool and allay its heat; and if we add to these all those other vices, which, *St Paul* assureth us, are the works of the flesh, such as *hatred, variance, emulation, strife, sedition, heresy, envyings, murders*; we have almost all the vices that distract our lives, owing to ill habits, and an evil temperament in the blood: and consequently a religious and prudent discipline of the body will be of great use to correct and subdue all these; for, since the irregularity of all our appetites

appetites and passions is founded, in a great measure, in the body, if followeth they must also have their cure there, and this cure is abstinence and self-denial: whereby the blood is brought to a calm and cool temperament, and the fuel that fed our excesses, is withdrawn; and consequently fasting and abstinence, by which this is effected, are important duties of religion.

It was for these reasons, and upon these principles, that the *Essenes*, the purest and best sect among the the *Jews*, enjoined frequent abstinence and self-denial; and *Philo* observes of them, that, having laid temperance as a certain foundation in their soul, they built all other virtues upon that.

But, secondly, another reason for fasting is the preservation of our health; and although this may seem, at first sight, to be only a prudential consideration; yet, when we reflect,



reflect, that health is necessary to the great duties of religion, as well as civil life; that it is the foundation upon which most of them entirely depend; that without it we can neither discharge those obligations we owe to God, to our neighbour, or to ourselves: I say, when we consider this, we shall soon find that the care of our health is an important duty of religion. For it is beyond all doubt, that God sent us into the world for useful and good purposes: to serve the ends of religion and society, and to employ those faculties and abilities he hath bestowed upon us to the several uses for which they were designed: and therefore to neglect, or misuse them, to any other purposes than he intended, or to impair them by any misconduct or misapplication, is the highest corruption and abuse. And, although this duty be of universal extent, yet it is more particularly

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larly incumbent upon those, who have families to provide for, whose welfare wholly depends upon their health and industry; and, if, as the apostle assureth us, *he is worse than an infidel who neglects to provide for his own house*, then he that neglecteth his health, upon which that provision dependeth, must, of necessity, fall under that censure.—Now, that fasting doth greatly contribute to health is beyond all question; for there is not a truer observation upon human life than this, that all mankind must either fast often, or exercise much, or take physic, or fall into diseases.

Now, of all these methods of health, fasting is certainly the most useful and most universal, at least to those that lead unactive lives, and are engaged (as citizens generally are) in sedentary callings, and such as will not allow them the use of so much exercise as nature originally intended,

intended, and is generally found to require. Besides, that some men are engaged in such ways of living as too often seduce them into fulness and intemperance; and therefore, as well to cure the evils their excesses will bring upon them, as to make reprisals upon their own corrupt appetites, and to punish former indulgence by abstinence and self-denial, both religion and prudence call upon them to fast frequently—and, if besides the religion of this duty, we consider how much an easier method of cure it is, how much safer, and how much less expensive, than applying to the physician; that the business of physic, generally speaking, is to undo the works of intemperance, and to remove those evils which our excesses have brought upon us; that abstinence is one of its greatest secrets, and that the only sure way of dealing with distempers is to prevent and keep them off; I say, if



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if we consider all these advantages that attend abstinence, we shall soon be fully convinced, that it is a very wise, as well as a very important duty of religion.

But, thirdly,

Another reason for stated and regular fasts is to set apart a certain and fixed portion of time for the offices of religion.

The bulk of mankind are so engaged in the cares and anxieties of the world; the necessary business of life; the impertinencies of visits; the vanities of dress, fashion, diversions, and amusements of all kinds, so entirely fill up most men's time, that religion is wholly excluded, they find leisure and room for every thing but the *one thing necessary*.

It is the advice of a Heathen moralist to call ourselves to an account, every night, for the conduct of the past day: to receive the applause of our own conscience, for the

the good we have done, and to condemn and correct the evil we were guilty of:—and I am persuaded, if most men would do this, even once a week, the world would not be near so wicked as it is.—The advantages that would attend such a sequestration from the world, and retirement into our own hearts, are very numerous.—For, first, a freedom from the anxieties and amusements of the world would dispose our minds much better for the duties of religion; and, when this was attended with abstinence, the mind, not oppressed with the turbulence of passion and worldly pursuits, the weight of fulness, and the labour of the digestion, would become quick and active, and rise with ease to divine contemplations, and delight in the refinements of religion and virtue.

Again, things are always best seen at a due distance, and therefore

fore a religious retirement is necessary, in order to take a truer prospect of life.

This life is a warfare; and it is well known that they that are engaged in the hurry of the battle, have not so clear and comprehensive a knowledge of it as they that behold it at a proper distance; serious reflections upon our true state and condition in this world are the great principles that must govern our lives in a right and reasonable conduct; and, when we have taken a clear prospect of the vanities and miseries of this world, as our blessed Saviour, when he fasted, did of its glories, we shall be better prepared and less concerned for the calamities and disappointments that we are sure to meet with in it. By this means our hearts will be softened to all the impressions of sorrow for sin, and humble resignation to the will of God; and the prospect of this vale  
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of misery will inspire us with compassion and good-will to our fellow-creatures, and engage us to ease (as far as we are able) that load of life which we behold the miserable race of mankind labouring under! at least it will deter us from adding to the afflictions of our brethren, that are already too grievous.

It is, indeed, a melancholy prospect! this retiring into our heart is *going into the house of mourning*; but then the wise man assureth us, that it is better to do so, *than to go into the house of feasting*; for that, saith he, *is the end of all men*; and *the living will lay it to heart*. And therefore he addeth, *sorrow is better than laughter*; for *by the sadness of the countenance the heart is made better*: and I am satisfied every man that hath made the trial, will readily own, that he hath always found his mind mended by it; but, after all, if there were no more in such a religious

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ligious retirement, than the security of spending one day in innocence; a wise man would find his account in it, and would have reason to think it a desirable abstinence, to abstain from evil, and the incitements to it, even for one day; which a man, that is immersed in the cares and vanities of the world, cannot always be secure of doing.

But, fourthly,

Another reason for setting apart certain seasons for religious fasts is to enable and dispose us the better to the great duty of charity to the poor. For, first, we shall, by this means, attain to a truer sense of their sufferings, and be more strongly incited to relieve them: for men are strongly inclined, by nature, to pity those pains which they themselves endure; and I am persuaded there are many in the world who live in such a constant course of plenty, and are such utter strangers to

to hunger and want, that they are very little acquainted with the pangs and cravings of appetite; and much less with the extreme and exquisite distresses of hunger and thirst; and consequently never have a right sense of the miseries of others in that condition, nor of the blessings they bestow in relieving them. And hence it is, that the prophet denounceth *a woe to them that are at ease*; and he addeth the reason, *because they are not grieved at the afflictions of Joseph*. *Woe to them that are at ease*, because they are not grieved at the afflictions of *Joseph*! wanting nothing themselves, they are never sensible of the wants and necessities of their brethren; whereas, in the present case, would these men experience the pain of hunger and thirst in themselves, I am satisfied they would be touched with a much quicker sense of it in others; it would then be natural to them



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to reason thus with themselves: If the hunger of a few hours, and that too under a sure prospect of relief, be so irksome and grievous to me; what must be the misery of those wretches who feel this, perhaps more than this, every day of their lives, under all the perplexities of fear and doubt how to be eased of it, and without the least rational prospect of being relieved from that wretched condition to the last day of their lives?

Again, as the observation of religious fasts would incline us, so also it would enable us, to be charitable to the poor; for by this means we might retrench from our ordinary expences, and give the overplus to charity. This is the surest and almost the only general method of being charitable to the purpose; because every man living, that hath the least constant subsistence, may be charitable this way. The generality

ality of mankind, among all their schemes of œconomy and expence, scarce ever assign any fixed portion of their income to charitable uses; whereas such an allotment as this would raise a sure and constant fund to the poor, and, I am satisfied, a much greater too, than some, that think themselves charitable, ever think of dispensing. Besides, that in this case avarice, the great enemy to charity, is perfectly reconciled to it: and all those common excuses, fear of poverty, necessary expence, provision for a family, and such-like, are entirely taken away.—It is indeed, a lamentable consideration, and yet is too certain, that if we will do our duty in the world (in our present fallen condition) we must, as our blessed Saviour commandeth, *be wise as serpents*, at the same time that we are *harmless as doves*.—We must use a thousand arts and contrivances to conquer

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the corruptions of our own hearts, which are as wily as they are wicked, and devise infinite subtilties to cheat us into neglect of duty. The common pretences for uncharitableness are fear of poverty and necessary provision for a family; but the real causes are covetousness and distrust of providence: now retrenching from our ordinary expences, to relieve the poor, is an artifice that strips even avarice of all its pretences: it hath not so much as a colour, or appearance, to plead in its excuse. Nay, it is an artifice that defraudeth luxury, as well as avarice; for fasting, in order to relieve the poor, is sacrificing to God what we withhold from the flesh and the devil; and this is perfectly agreeable to God's own precepts concerning this institution, in the Iviith chapter of *Isaiab*, the 5th and following verses: *Is it such a fast that I have chosen, a day for a*  
*man*



man to afflict his soul! Is it to bow down his head as a bulrush, and to spread sackcloth and ashes under him? Wilt thou call this a fast, and an acceptable day to the Lord? Is not this the fast that I have chosen, to loose the bands of wickedness, to undo the heavy burthens, and to let the oppressed go free, and that ye break every yoke? Is it not to deal thy bread to the hungry, and that thou bring the poor that are cast out to thy house? When thou seest the naked, that thou cover him! and that thou hide not thyself from thine own flesh.—Hence we see that the intention of God, in directing his people to religious fasts, was not barely for their affliction, in chastisement for their sins, but is principally intended for their amendment; nor is the design of such a fast any way answered by an outward humiliation, but by an inward reformation; by the heart's being melted down by

true contrition, and sincere sorrow for sin, into a right sense of religion; and softened to all the impressions of humanity; good nature, and charity.

And thus I have endeavoured to lay before you the many excellent ends and uses of a religious fast, — that helpeth us to a mastery of our appetites and passions, by withdrawing away that fuel that administereth to their excesses; and, by so doing, greatly contributeth to the tranquillity and happiness of life. —

That it tendeth to the preservation of our health, and delivereth us from those evils, which luxury and intemperance bring upon us; and enableth us to discharge the great duties of religion and civil life; that it sequestereth a portion of our time from the hurry and amusements of the world; engageth us to reflection and consideration, the great principles of good living; giveth us a  
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truer prospect of life, and prepareth us for all those vexations and disappointments that we are sure to meet with in it. — And, lastly, that it enableth and inclineth us to all the offices of charity and compassion to the distressed of our fellow-creatures, by giving us a truer sense of their calamities, and engaging us to spare from our ordinary expences, perhaps from our luxury and excess, wherewithal to supply their pressing and crying necessities; and I hope a duty that comes recommended by so many advantages, will not, cannot, need any other motives or exhortations to the practice of it.

The inferences, deducible from this doctrine of a religious fast, will, I hope, be found worthy of our most serious attention, nor are the objections that lie against it to be disregarded; but the consideration and clearing of these heads must be the business of another discourse.





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## S E R M O N IX.

The great Duty and Importance of  
a religious Fast further considered.

Being a Charity Sermon, preached  
in the City of *London*, in the  
Year 1750.

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*Galatians, Chap. v. Ver. 24.*

*And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts.*

I N a former discourse upon these words, I laid before you, in the best manner I was able, the great importance of a religious fast, and the several motives to the practice of this duty, from the great ends to  
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be attained by it; the subduing of our appetites and passions to the dictates of reason and religion; the sequestering a certain portion of our time, from the hurry and vanities of life, to meditation and reflection; and the redeeming our health from that fulness of intemperance in which we are too often engaged from the ill effects of that sedentary condition, to which men of study, and the confinements of various trades, are condemned.

I now proceed to deduce the most useful inferences I can from this doctrine.

And, first, from the doctrine laid down, I think it is evident, that fasting, as it is enjoined by the Church of *Rome*, and practised by those of better condition in that communion, *viz.*—abstaining from one meat to indulge in another, perhaps more luxurious, inflaming, and expensive, can, in no wise, be called



called a religious duty, because it doth not answer any one of the great ends of fasting abovementioned, but is, in truth, for the most part, destructive of them all. I most sincerely wish that the defenders of this doctrine, or practice, (if there be any such) would seriously consider how utterly inconsistent their opinions are with the refinement of that truly philosophic and divine precept of St. Paul, *Rom. xiii. 14*, which forbiddeth the crime in the cause, *make not provision for the flesh, to fulfil the lusts thereof.*

It must indeed be owned, that, as fasting is practised by the poorer sort of the *Romish* communion, there is a good deal of self-denial in it:— But then, on the other hand, it must also be allowed, that these are the people that need it least; I mean those of them who toil and work for their living. St. Paul excellently observeth, that *they that*  
will

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*will not work, neither should they eat;* — meaning that they who are idle, and useless in society, should not be subsisted; but they who will work must eat; and it is a maxim in physic, that they who fast must not labour; and consequently they that labour must not fast.

From hence it follows, that fasting is a duty principally incumbent upon those who live in a course of plenty and fulness, not sufficiently subdued by bodily labour: and therefore if it be asked how often, and how long, we are to fast? I answer, as often and as long as we find it necessary to get the mastery of our passions; to subdue their irregularity to the conduct of reason and religion; and to attain all the great ends abovementioned (for the end must always determine and direct the means) that is, as long as we find ourselves lustful, envious, intemperate, contentious, so long must

must we endeavour to subdue all these vices by frequent fasts and self-denials; but, in general, the directions of the Church, which are the effects of well-weighed deliberations, and those too assisted by the guidance and influence of the holy Spirit of God, are our sure rules: and these come recommended to us by the practice of the primitive Christians, who always fasted twice a week, on *Wednesdays* and *Fridays*, till three in the afternoon; that is, till three or four hours after the usual time of dining, but longer on particular occasions. Or, if the practice of the primitive Christians be an example of too much severity for the imitation of a degenerate age, at least half their discipline cannot be thought too much by any that profess themselves Christians; and therefore one day in the week is the least we can possibly set apart for a duty of so great importance.



importance. And be assured, that one day so spent will bring a blessing upon all the rest; it is consecrating a part to God, in order to bring a blessing upon the whole.

But it is objected by, some, that they cannot perform this duty without great uneasiness, and without danger of falling into excess when it is over; and therefore they ought to be excused from it.

To these I answer, that these are excuses, which all men have an equal right to plead; and therefore, if admitted, would entirely destroy this duty. But, supposing the first of them to be true, is there any thing good or useful in the world, that is not attended with some difficulty? Nay, is not the difficulty (generally speaking) in proportion to the goodness and excellence of the thing? And yet no man ever thought it a just objection against the use of physic, that it was nauseous

seous and hateful; nor against learning, that it was not to be attained but by labour and study; the great ends of both being sufficient to reconcile and recommend the uneasiness and toil that attended them; and are not the mastery of our passions, and the happiness both of this life and the next, which depend upon that mastery; are not these great and important ends, and, consequently, is it not worth while to be at some pains to attain them?

Besides, that, if this duty were not attended with some difficulty, where would be the merit, or the virtue of practising it? We ought also to consider, that the ends of fasting would not be fully answered, if it did not give some uneasiness; for how should we be incited by the practice of this duty to relieve the wants and necessities of others, if we did not feel them in ourselves? And yet I am persuaded, however

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difficult it may appear at first, a little habit would make it tolerable to every one living that needeth it; and that, after all, it is not attended with more uneasiness, than an *Epicurean* would recommend to his rich votaries, even for the interest of their pleasures, to teach them a new luxury, the luxury of plain and simple food; I might add too the luxury of eating with a good appetite. Nor is there any danger of excess on such an occasion, if (after the example of the primitive Christians) we abstain from wine and all kinds of luxurious food;—if the food be, as it always should be upon these occasions, cool and temperate, and such as we are not wont to indulge in. But however, if fasting be, in some men, attended with so much uneasiness, as is not to be conquered, let them, at least, eat sparingly, and confine themselves to simple and less luxurious food; for the



the ends of fasting will, in a good measure, be answered by so doing; and it must be owned, that there is a good degree of abstinence and self-denial even in that. Confining ourselves to a particular unusual food is like putting the body into an unusual posture; it is easy to put it into such a posture, but practice only can enable us to keep it there.

But, besides the several Christian ends that are answered by a religious fast, there are also some of a social and civil nature, which will attend the public and annual exercise of the fasts instituted by the Church, I mean the observance of that antient and excellent institution of keeping *Lent*.

Now one social and important advantage that would arise from hence is this: the preservation of many animals ordained for our sustenance, till they could better an-

swer the ends of their creation; for, as that is the season in which the young of most animals are produced in greatest plenty, it is evident, that the abstaining from flesh for a few weeks, in that season, would redeem great numbers of them from the luxury of the rich, till they grew up to be more amply, more extensively, and more equally useful; and it is certain, that the difficulty of abstinence, in that season, will be considerably less, when fish is found to be, at the same time, in more plenty—in greater perfection for the palates of the rich, and at a much lower rate for the relief of the poor; and in this, I think, the civil policy, prudence, and good œconomy of our neighbouring nations (to say nothing of religion) must be allowed remarkably to transcend ours!

My brethren, if the principles I have now laid down have their due weight

weight with you, and have made true impressions upon your hearts, you have now before your eyes the happiest opportunity of putting them in practice, to the good of your country, to the glory of God, to the health of your bodies, and to the salvation of your souls.

It is a confessed truth, that no nation under heaven live in so constant a course of fulness, as this nation doth; and consequently that there is no people upon earth who stand in so much need of abstinence as they do; and therefore there is no people upon earth to whom this duty of religion is of so great importance; and, as you are allowed to be, at the same time, the most remarkably charitable of all Christian societies, it will surely be no great difficulty to reconcile and engage you to this great Christian duty of abstinence, which is thus

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happily



happily found to fall in with your inclination, and with your interest.

A little abatement of the frequency and fulness of your meals, especially at this season of the year, would be a fence to your health, a source of chearfulness to your spirits, and a large fund of bounty to the poor; every abatement of rich and full meals is an abatement of so much expence, and every abatement of expence is a saving of so much superfluity, of infinite importance to the poor, and, at the same time, highly salutary to yourselves. What was the guilt of the rich glutton in the Gospel? Not that he enjoyed the good things which God had given him; for God giveth his good things to be enjoyed;—to be enjoyed with temperance and thankfulness. No, his guilt was, that he indulged himself to the full, and left the wretched poor at his gate unpitied and unprovided

provided for ; we may easily judge how he compassionate and relieved their wants, or, rather, how totally he neglected them, when he left his dogs, the only surgeons to their sores.

This, surely, was a sad failure of humanity, as well as charity ; and a shocking picture of selfish luxury ! he kept all his good things to himself, and consigned poor *Lazarus* only to his evil things ; to his hunger and to his sores ; to stench and pain. And what did *Lazarus* sue for from him ? He begged only for what the rich miser could neither want nor use ; he begged only to be fed with the crumbs which fell from his table ! and yet he begged in vain !

Alas ! my brethren, all these poor orphans and outcasts before your eyes now beg for no more at your hands ; they beg but for the crumbs that fall (or at least might well be

spared) from your tables ; and will you, can you, refuse them that !

I am satisfied, that, were the very worst of them now in the condition of *Lazarus*, the least compassionate and Christian spirit among you would not turn away from their relief. And will you not do what is infinitely better than supplying their wants, and relieving their distresses ? Will you not, as far as in you lies, prevent them all ? Certainly you will, if you allow yourselves to think seriously, either as men or Christians.

Consider these children under all the advantages of a Christian education, derived upon them by your charity ; and you see in them so many future blessings and ornaments to your country ! honest servants, able artists, and useful citizens.

On the other hand, look upon them in the light of so many neglected and uneducated outcasts ; miscreants



creants abandoned to misery and want; and how many future *Lazars* may you behold among them? *Lazars*, and worse than *Lazars*; not begging bread, but forcing it from you; not begging it at your gates, but forcing it, in your streets and highways, at the hazard both of their lives and your own; and it may be murdering to come at it! not submitting their sores to your dogs, but spreading worse sores in your cities.

One penny a day, retrenched for a few weeks, from the expence of your meals (which is in effect but the crumbs that fall from your tables) would raise a much greater annual income than the whole expence of all the charity-schools in the nation amounteth to; and will you neglect so noble a purpose, that might be attained at so small an expence?

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There is one consideration worthy our most serious attention, on this subject; it is this:—the first command God laid on mankind, was a restraint of appetite; and their first offence was indulgence of appetite, contrary to this command; this indulgence in our first parents brought sin and misery into the world, and entailed them upon their posterity.

My brethren, our great business here is, by a more perfect obedience, to recover, as far as we can, that purity from which they fell.

Let us then, in the name of God, counteract the evils of their indulgence, as far as we are able; and, by obeying the Christian precepts of abstinence, and mortification of our appetites, recover ourselves, and as many others, as our abilities will extend to, from sin and misery; by taking the best measures, in our power, to restore universal obedience to

to the divine will, by propagating piety and virtue in the world; and how can this be more effectually done, than by initiating and educating the numerous indigent and outcasts of the earth in all the principles of Christianity, and inuring them to deny the unruly calls of appetite; and, at the same time, habituating ourselves to retrench all the demands of luxury and indulgence, and apply all the savings from their excesses, both of intemperance and expence, to the support of all that want our aid, in the pursuit of every thing virtuous, pious, and praise-worthy in this world; in this sadly unparadised earth—unparadised by impious indulgence!

O my brethren, can you hesitate one moment upon so glorious a resolution? Can you hesitate one moment to redeem your country from so much vice and villainy, and  
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blefs it with fo much virtue and honeft arts, at fo cheap a rate? Can you hesitate one moment, whether you will refcue fo many of your fellow-creatures from mifery, and *save fo many souls alive*, at fo fmall an expence? God forbid! no, my brethren, you will not fail to redeem fo great a number of orphans and outcafts at fo low a ranfom! to redeem them from guilt and mifery, from living in every vice and villainy, and ending in infamy! ending in infamy here, and everlafting perdition hereafter! Nay more, you will not only redeem them from guilt and mifery, but you will recover them to true piety and virtue, to be bleffings and ornaments to the community and Church of God.— To him be glory for ever and ever, *Amen.*

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# S E R M O N X.

Preached for the Relief and Support  
of the Widows and Orphans of  
deceased Clergymen in the Dio-  
cese of *Dublin*.

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*Revelations, Chap. xiv. Ver. 13.*

*And I heard a voice from heaven,  
saying unto me, Write, Blessed are  
the dead which die in the Lord,  
from henceforth. Yea, saith the  
Spirit, that they may rest from  
their labours, and their works do  
follow them.*

**M**Y brethren, we are here re-  
ligiously assembled to com-  
memorate, and, in some measure, to  
reward, the merits of some of our  
deceased

deceased brethren of the established Church, the clergy of this diocese, who have died in the Lord; but died necessitous, and left their families indigent, and, as such, in a great measure dependent on the charity of their brethren, the clergy and the laity of the same diocese and communion.

That they who so die are blessed from thenceforth, we are expressly assured by a voice from heaven; and that voice, as we learn from the ist chapter of this *Revelation*, is the voice of the Son of God, the voice of our blessed Lord and Saviour *Jesus Christ*; and this declaration from him confirmed by the Holy Ghost. *Yea, saith the Spirit*, or, as it is more fully expressed in our burial service, *even so saith the Spirit*; and he adds the reasons.—First, because *they rest from their labours*; and, secondly, because *their works do follow them*.

Now



Now the business of this discourse shall be to examine, and, as far as I am able, to clear these two points.

First, to shew how those that die in the Lord are blessed, as our blessed Saviour pronounces them to be; and for those reasons assigned by the Spirit of God in the text.

And, secondly, as far as I am able, to explain those reasons.

Now by labours, in the text, are meant all the cares, troubles, toils, and vexations, which render this world a vale of misery sometimes to the best of men, and a scene of unsolid and unsatisfying pursuits and enjoyments to all.

Whoever hath read the Bible cannot but know, that a curse from God quickly followed the fall of *Adam*; that he was condemned to labour out his life, until he returned to dust; that the curse extended to the earth also, and continueth, in  
some

some measure, to this day, both upon that and his posterity.

A little reflection will inform him, that piercing cares, vexations, and anxieties are, to our minds, what thorns and thistles are to the body and to the ground; and that no state or condition in this world is exempt from the calamity of this curse.

If any earthly condition could be clear of it, one would imagine it must be that which most resembles the great and glorious employments of God himself; inspiring piety and virtue; teaching truth, dehorting and deterring from evil, guiding to good, and encouraging and exhorting to it.

My brethren, ye all know, that these are the great duties of the Christian clergy; and I trust in God, and sincerely thank him, that I have good reason to believe, that some of those his more immediate  
servants

servants (I hope many of them) are constantly and conscientiously employed in these pursuits, and make them the great purpose of their lives. And yet we have good reason to know, that these very employments are not without their attendant vexations; even our blessed Saviour was forced to endure the contradiction of sinners against himself, as we learn from the xiith chapter of the epistle to the *Hebrews*, and the 3d verse; and shall we, his lowly servants, expect to be exempt, and shall we not be happy, when we are?

Alas! we have not only the contradictions of sinners to contend with in this world, but oftentimes even their obstinacy, their revilings and abuse, and, what is yet worse than their abuse, all their vices and abominations; whereas we are well informed by *Job*, concerning the

Q regions



regions of death, that ~~there~~ *the wicked cease from troubling.*

The Psalmist declareth, in the 1st verse of his 1st Psalm, that *blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful.*

And, surely, it may well be considered, as a great blessing, never to have mixed in the prophane, irreligious conversation of abandoned, profligate sinners; but, on the contrary, to feel ourselves happy in having, to the best of our abilities, taken all opportunities to rebuke and deter from them, and to guard all others from the infection; performing the part of a good physician, employing his utmost skill to remove, or, what is much more desirable, to prevent the pollution. Such a one is in the condition of those who see themselves sound and clean from the excruciating infections, racks,

sacks, and tortures of all the maladies that gangrene, canker, and corrupt the hospital of incurables, all around them, in this wicked world. To be sound and unpolluted, in such circumstances, is one of the highest delights that health and purity can inspire, added to the consolations of a good conscience! and to leave the world in that condition! blessed, indeed, are the dead, so dying!—Dying with all the consolations of a good conscience, and with all their hopes full of immortality!—Hopes of sharing the heavenly beatitudes!—In the beatitudes of angels and archangels, and the spirits of good men made perfect.

O, my brethren, this is dying in the Lord—and this plainly proves a beatitude attending those who lead a godly life, even in this world, antecedent to those which await their departure hence.

Q 2 We

We come now to consider those blessings immediately consequent to their death: *Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord, from henceforth. Even so, saith the Spirit, assigning the reasons already mentioned.*

And the first of these is, that they rest from their labours.

Let us now inquire, more particularly, what those labours are, from which our deceased brethren of the clergy rest.

Our blessed Saviour hath informed us, in the xliith chapter of St. Matthew, at the 52d verse, that every scribe which is instructed unto the kingdom of heaven, is like unto a man that is an house-holder, which bringeth forth out of his treasure things new and old.

Every scribe which is instructed unto the kingdom of heaven — that is, every minister, duly ordained, prepared, and fitted to be a teacher of



of divine doctrines, is like unto a man that is an house-holder, which bringeth forth out of his treasure things new and old.—A prudent and a provident house holder takes care to lay up proper stores of materials, and utensils, for all the occasions and exigencies of his family and his affairs; in like manner, a scribe, well instructed for the kingdom of heaven, a teacher rightly informed in heavenly doctrines, in all the duties we owe to God and man, must lay up a treasure of knowledge.—He must be informed in things new and old, in antient and modern learning.—In the antient and present state of the world; in the nature of virtue and vice, and the several obligations of laws and duties; and, if he be sufficiently rich in these treasures, to supply, inform, admonish, rebuke, and exhort, as occasion shall offer, or necessity require, he must also be liberal, as

he is rich.—The word our blessed Saviour makes use of on this occasion, and is here rendered to *bring forth*, fully implies liberality and indulgence in the distribution. It must not be made coldly, as it were, with thrift, neglect, and apparent unconcern; for that is not what the Scripture calls this Christian good office, *the labour of love*. No, it is indolence at best; 'tis too like doing it, as St. Paul expressly says such works should not be done, *grudgingly*; for doing it coldly, is, indeed, doing it, as it were, *grudgingly and of necessity*; whereas God *loveth the chearful giver*. And it should be the true joy of the preacher, as it is his greatest glory, to imitate the giver of every good and perfect gift, on all such occasions.—*The giver of every good and perfect gift*, who, as the Psalmist expresseth it, *poureth his benefits upon us*; a good man, saith our blessed Saviour,

Saviour, *Luke vi. 45*, out of the good treasure of his heart, bringeth forth that which is good; for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh. From hence we learn, that what a good man speaketh he should speak from his heart; from hence also we learn, that the treasure in a good man's heart should be poured out liberally, at least, if not largely, upon his hearers; not only with liberality, but with affection and zeal; and those, my brethren, are neither cold, nor idle, nor unactive principles, but quite otherwise.

It must, indeed, be owned they do often, in some degree, exhaust and spend the teacher; but the infinite goodness of God is sufficient abundantly to supply the expence.

When *David* laments, that the zeal of the Lord's house had eaten him up, he immediately applies to God to refresh and re-establish him:

Q 4

Hear



Hear me, O Lord, for thy loving-kindness is good; and he elsewhere, Psalm xxxvi, declareth, concerning the children of men, that they shall be satisfied with plenteousness from God; and that he shall give them drink of his pleasures, for with him is the well of life. And therefore we have good reason to be sure, that they, who faithfully and humbly call upon him, in all their wants and troubles, are quickly heard, recruited, and plentifully supplied; although, if that should not always be the case, I am satisfied, my brethren, there are some of your teachers who would not long hesitate to cry out to their people, as St. Paul does to the *Corinthians*, 2 ep. ch. xii. ver. 15. *I will very gladly spend and be spent for you.*

My brethren, two points, of great importance, naturally offer themselves, as clear consequences from this doctrine of our blessed Saviour.

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The first is, that the scribe, who is employed in treasuring up stores of useful knowledge and heavenly doctrines for the benefit of the people committed to his care, and is constant and zealously conscientious in distributing them as he ought, must, from the nature of the thing, be less fitted, and less able, to treasure up stores of wealth and earthly provision for his family.

Such scribes, had they carefully attended to earthly purposes and pursuits, the fair presumption is, that they might have succeeded better, with the same industry and assiduity which they employed to qualify themselves for their holy profession; so that, in reality, the time, taken away from the pursuit of their own earthly riches, hath often been employed in providing better treasures for their people.

Indeed, it must be owned, that the clergy are, in this respect, under  
peculiar

peculiar disadvantages; it requires much time, much study, great expence, and a great compass of knowledge, to prepare them for their great offices, and render them adequate examples and teachers of true religion; and, when all this is accomplished, the reward is not always adequate to the time, the trouble, and the treasure expended, to attain that glorious character: nor, indeed, can it always be so, in the ordinary course of things; and, when they die in such circumstances, they may very properly be said to *rest from their labours*.

This is the first and clear point; and the next is full as clear, that, where such a man dies, his works should follow him; that is, that his brethren, for whom he laboured out his life, should have a due and conscientious care of the family so left indigent and unprovided for; and, certainly, the Apostle's reasoning up-  
on



on this head, 1 Cor. ix, is clear, strong, and unanswerable: *If we have sown unto you spiritual things, is it a great thing, if we reap your carnal things?* And again, in the vith of Galatians, *Let him that is taught in the word communicate to him that teacheth, in all good things.* And, when this is done after their death, their works may very properly be said to *follow them*.—And that they should do so, my brethren, is the plain dictate of justice, as well as gratitude; and, since the debt cannot be paid to the deceased, in the name of God, let it be paid to their families.—Their families are their true executors in this case; and, if the inhabitants of the place where it was contracted are not able to pay it, let it be considered as a tax, and let it be raised, as many other just taxes are, upon the country, more at large. By this means, what cannot be effected by a few  
few

few may, with ease, be accomplished by all; and, certainly, whatever institution, means, or measures are evidently calculated for the public good, should, beyond all controversy, be encouraged and supported by the public; the contributions to that purpose can never be too general.

My brethren, what I am now going to lay down is a point so apparently invidious and obnoxious to the reproach of pride and vanity, that, although it be demonstrably true and highly important, yet it is with great reluctance I venture to advance it; but truth exacts it, and truth must be obeyed.

The position is this:—That the truly Christian clergy, of all countries, acting in their truly Christian characters, are, of all others, the greatest benefactors to mankind.

My brethren, the greatest benefactions that can be made, in this world,

world, to reasonable beings, fallible, erroneous, and prone to vice, is to instruct, to guide, to guard from errors and evil habits, and to weed and root them out, as soon as they are seen. These are the well-known duties of the clergy; and these, in the ordinary course of things, are their daily and weekly employments. And I hope, and trust in God, that, in many of them, they are zealously and conscientiously pursued and practised.—Would to God I could say in all.

My brethren, the truly Christian clergy are the undoubted successors of the disciples and apostles of *Jesus Christ*; and therefore whatever he himself pronounceth of them, or can be fairly inferred, from the principles and doctrines laid down by him in the Gospel, relating to them (to the then priests and pastors of his Church, which is to last for ever) is justly applicable and  
duly



duly appertaineth to their successors,  
making proper abatements for the  
more immediate inspirations and  
miraculous endowments and powers  
of those disciples.

To begin then:—In his sermon  
upon the mount, *Matthew v*, be-  
sides many points of doctrine of  
great importance to all mankind,  
there are two, principally, if not  
peculiarly, applicable and adapted  
to his disciples.

First, he tells them,  
*Ye are the salt of the earth—*

And, secondly,  
*Ye are the light of the world—*

Let us examine, then, what the  
natural and obvious qualities of  
these two bodies are, and with what  
propriety they can be applied and  
ascribed to the priesthood.

The most obvious and known  
quality of *salt* is to preserve from  
corruption; and, in order to effect  
this, it must cleanse and absorb cor-  
ruptive

ruptive humours; and so it becomes at once an emblem of purity, incorruption, and perpetuity; and therefore a perpetual covenant is called a covenant of salt. And it was made a necessary part of all sacrifices offered to God; every oblation of thy meat-offering shalt thou season with salt, saith Moses--and again, with all thy offerings thou shalt offer salt. Levit. ii. 13.

How properly, then, doth our blessed Saviour stile his disciples, who are the guardians of purity and incorruption, and the ministers of eternal salvation to mankind, with what propriety doth he stile them *the salt of the earth!*

Good God! what would become of the world, if there was no such thing as teachers and guardians of piety and virtue in it!

God knows, it is bad enough as it is, with all the helps and aids which providence hath appointed to assist

assist and protect it. What then would become of it, if it were left utterly destitute of instructions and exhortations to virtue and piety? For, whereas both these are now sufficiently unaided, and, too often, not only unencouraged, but despised? Were they totally expelled and alienated from the earth, how much more justly might Religion then cry out, even then more than now, with its present small train of attendant virtues, take up *David's* complaint and prayer to God, in the *iii*d Psalm, *Lord, how are they increased that trouble me! many are they that rise up against me! but thou, O Lord, art my defender, thou art my worship, and the lifter up of my head—Up, Lord, and help me, O my God.*

Indeed, it is clear to a demonstration, that, if he did not help us, if the providence of God did not signally interpose, in the protection  
of



of piety and virtue, by the ministration of his priesthood, this world would quickly become a hell upon earth.

The next character, pronounced by our blessed Saviour of his disciples, and therefore applicable to the Christian ministry, is, *ye are the light of the world.*

My brethren, the great, obvious business and benefits of light, we all know, are to inform us of all the objects around us; to direct us in all our ways, to shew us what to pursue, and what to shun, in the travel of life; and to guard us from all the dangers, and in all the hazards of darkness.

This is the character of natural light, and the intellectual light of the mind, under the direction of the Christian religion, is equally obvious, and as easily conceived; the use of it is to guard us from impiety and vice, and to guide us in all the

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ways

ways of truth and virtue ; to teach us what to shun, and what to pursue, in this wicked world ; to inform us in all the wonders of the creation, and direct us humbly and thankfully to implore and accept our information from God, in all the duties we owe to God and man ; and, above all, to direct in the ways of everlasting life, and fix us in the true road of eternal salvation ; not only by the light of divine and human wisdom, but also by the burning and shining lights of heavenly examples and true piety ! and that the clergy are the principal (God forbid they should be the only) guides and monitors, in these great points, needs no proof.

All this considered, it is surely no wonder to find, that our mother-country, as *England* in effect is (to the majority of Protestants here) hath long since erected a charter society, a corporation for the support  
and

and protection of the widows and orphans of poor clergymen; a society, consisting chiefly of the sons of clergy, who are well known to have produced some of the greatest men that have adorned and blessed their country since the Reformation.

And surely, my brethren, it is high time that we, their descendants, should follow and emulate their example in this, who are but too apt to imitate them, in many instances less laudable.

To conclude, then, and sum up all in a few words:—My brethren, we are informed, in the *Wisdom of Solomon*, that *the multitude of the wise is the welfare of the world*; and we learn from the wisdom of God that the good only are wise: would we then promote the welfare of the world, let us, as far as we are able, add to the number of the wise, that is, of the good and virtuous, upon



all occasions, more especially upon this, where the interest of virtue is so deeply concerned!

If then ye believe that your deceased brethren of this diocese have died in the Lord, listen to the voice in the text; it is a voice from heaven, it is the voice of our Lord and Saviour *Jesus Christ*! O listen and obey it, in relation to these your Christian brethren, and let their works follow them!

We have, now, a blessed opportunity of doing all that the prophet *Micah* informs us the Lord our God requireth of us; if we delight *to do justly*, let us render an equivalent to the widows and orphans of those who have expended their time, their trouble, their spirits;—who have laboured out their lives in the service of the public.

If we delight *to do good*, let us reward virtue, and encourage industry, in their offspring.

If

If we *love mercy*, can we hesitate to protect innocence, and relieve distress, in their widows and orphans?

If we *walk humbly with our God*, can we neglect the necessities of those, the relicts and descendants of his lowly and devoted servants, deceased in indigence, and in their duty to him? If God hath blessed us with upright, beneficent, and Christian dispositions, let us exert them all, to the purposes for which they were bestowed upon us by God! let us exert them to do justice, to reward virtue, to encourage industry, to protect innocence, to relieve distress, to promote piety, to bless the world, and more particularly our own country, by the support and education of a numerous progeny of the good and virtuous; in so doing, set a fair and noble example, inciting others to all these heavenly offices, and productive of

greater and more to late posterity!  
 In a word, let your light so shine  
 before men, on this occasion, that  
 they may see, honour, and emulate  
 our good works, and glorify our Fa-  
 ther which is in heaven.

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**T**HIS epistle is an exhortation  
 to him to use his utmost  
 endeavours to reform the lives of  
 the people of Ceres committed to  
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## SERMONS XI. XII.

The moral and religious Advantages  
derived to the World by the  
*Christian Religion.*

The Substance of two Sermons.

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*Titus*, Chap. ii. Ver. 11, 12.

Ver. 11. *For the grace of God, that  
bringeth salvation, hath appeared  
to all men,*

Ver. 12. *Teaching us, that, denying  
ungodliness and worldly lusts, we  
should live soberly, righteously, and  
godly in this present world.*

**T**HIS epistle is an exhortation  
to *Titus* to use his utmost  
endeavours to reform the lives of  
the people of *Crete* committed to

his care, from this plain principle, that the great design and end of the Gospel was to make mankind more holy and more virtuous. — *For the grace of God, that bringeth salvation, hath appeared to all men; teaching us, that, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world.*

The great end, for which the light of the Gospel shone out into the world, was to dispel the darkness by which mankind were deluded and depraved! to recover them from those gross corruptions into which their ignorance had long seduced and still continued them; and to guide them in the ways of truth, wisdom, and virtue.

This is the great end, the professed purpose, and plain tendency of the Gospel of *Christ*. And yet, notwithstanding all this, it is boldly objected by the enemies of Christianity,

anity, that, whatever its boasted excellence, above all other religions, may be, yet what is the world the better for it?—Since, as wise men have observed, all ages are equally corrupt; men go on in their vices after the same manner; indulge their appetites and passions as they used to do; and the world is as wicked now as it was seventeen hundred years ago.

To this I answer—that however men may argue upon speculative and abstracted notions about an equal quantity of good and evil in the world, as of light and darkness; yet, if we reason from fact and observation (which is the only true way of arguing in this case) we shall find as much reason to conclude, from the history of the world, that all countries have, at all times, been equally barren, and all seasons equally sickly, as that all ages have been equally wicked:—Will any  
man



man believe that *Rome* was as wicked, from its foundation to *Cataline's* conspiracy, as it was from thence to *Domitian*?—That *Lycurgus* wrought no reformation in *Sparta*, or *Solon* in *Athens*?—That the children of *Israel* were equally wicked under *David*, the man after God's own heart; and under *Jeroboam*, the son of *Nebat*, who made *Israel* to sin; and *Rehoboam*, the son of *Solomon*, in whose reign it is expressly said, that *Judah* did evil in the sight of the Lord, and provoked him to jealousy with their sins which they had committed, above all that their fathers had done.—And therefore (not to cumber you with many more proofs to the same purpose) I hope we may yet conclude against this bold assertion; and, however the champions of it endeavour to confirm their opinion by their practice; yet, neither their wisdom, nor yet their vices, are sufficient to establish this position, but, in spite of

of both, it will for ever remain an evident and demonstrated truth, that the world is infinitely amended by the Christian religion—and that it is so will appear from the proof of these three propositions.

First, that Christians have a better knowledge of God, and the concerns of religion, than the Heathens had.

Secondly, that they worship him in a much purer and more rational manner. And,

Thirdly, as a consequence from each of these, that they are more holy and moral in their lives.

And, first, that Christians have a better knowledge of God, and the concerns of religion, will, I believe, be owned by the greatest champions of Heathenism, and cannot be denied by any one that considers either the multiplicity of Gods adored by them, or the variety of absurd and inconsistent notions entertained

tertained of the Deity\*, too absurd to be recited, and too many to be recounted. And therefore I shall

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\* Some confining his providence to heaven (as *Aristotle* and the *Peripatetics*) others entirely taking it away (as the *Epicureans*)—some imagining God corporeal (as the *Stoics*) and subject to all the vices and corruptions of human nature (as the bulk of the heathen world did)—some denying that the Gods could shew any grace or favour (as *Epicurus*)—others that they were capable of being offended (as *Plutarch* and the *Stoics*)—some making matter coeval with God, and consequently independent of him; and asserting an obliquity in it, which he could not correct: others denying his omniscience (as *Cæcilius*) and others his prescience (as *Cicero* himself in his treatise on Fate) others subjecting the Gods to a blind and irresistible fate—In a word, almost every several sect, of what they deemed wise men amongst them, denying or depriving the divine nature of some one or more powers and perfections; and all of them oppressed with infinite doubts and difficulties concerning it; as may be seen at large in *Cicero's Academic Questions*—and *de Natura Deorum*.

Add to all this, that the unequal condition of virtue and vice, in this world, was impossible to be accounted for upon their principles, in a way consistent with infinite wisdom and goodness; the immortality of the soul, the great interest and support of religion, together with a future state of rewards and punishments, being denied by many, and for the most part but doubtfully surmised by all the rest.

That Christians, therefore, who assert and believe the immortality of the soul and a future retribution, and believe it upon the best grounds that mortals can, believe more reasonably and justly, is out of all controversy.

only



only observe, that there never was one sect, even of wise men, amongst them, who did not entertain some gross and absurd notions, either of the wisdom and goodness of God, or of his power and providence.

Whereas Christians, we know, believe, and can prove, that God is an eternal spirit, omnipotent, omniscient, omnipresent, creator of the universe, preserving his work, and directing the issues and events of all things, both in heaven and earth; infinitely good and gracious to his creatures, and yet, at the same time, just and holy as he is good, hating all iniquity; who, as he will reward the righteous with eternal and inconceivable felicity, so will he punish the wicked with endless and intolerable torments.—And, from this purer fountain of the knowledge of God, a purer course of practice must flow; and therefore, that Christians, who believe and know this, and  
are,

are, many of them, able to prove it to a demonstration, have a better knowledge of God, more adequate and honourable notions of his being and attributes, a juster sense of the present state of this world and the concerns of that which is to come, can never be denied by any ingenuous mind, without equal ignorance and absurdity.—And, from a more perfect knowledge of God and the concerns of religion, a more perfect obedience must follow; for, among the Heathen, who would fear that God, who, as they imagined, could do them no hurt; or love him, who could not reward them with immortality?—Who could confide in that providence, which, they believed, did not regard them; or pray for that protection, which did not reach them?—Who would apply, for a cure of his corruptions, to a being that could not, in his opinion, rectify the malignity of matter?

ter?—or refer the issue of all his counsels and endeavours to his wisdom, whom he imagined ignorant of them, who could neither foresee nor foretell them, and consequently could not provide against them?—or who would expect relief, in distress and difficulty, from his aid, who was, as he believed, himself subject to a blind necessity?—or, lastly, who would forego the pleasures and temptations of this world, on account of that immortality, which he either was wholly ignorant of, or but doubtfully surmised?

If, then, the ignorance of the Heathens, in the concerns of religion, had a strong tendency to corrupt their morals, it cannot be denied but the knowledge of Christians is likewise of great force to amend theirs; for *who would not fear thee, O King of nations, at whose wrath the earth shall tremble, and the nations shall not be able to abide thy*



thy indignation? Who would not trust to that wisdom, which searcheth the secrets of the heart, and seeth the thoughts afar off, and disposeth the issues and events of all things, both in heaven and earth, in the wisest manner, and to the best purposes?—Who would not confide in that providence, which extends itself to the most minute productions and events, with whom the very hairs of our head are numbered, and without whom so much as a sparrow does not fall to the earth? Who would not love the author of his health and happiness, the giver of every good and perfect gift, who pardoneth all his offences, and healeth all his infirmities?—Who would not depend upon that power that is itself unlimited, and independent, and who would not gladly implore his aid, who is always nigh to them that call upon him, he also will hear their cry, and will help them? Who would

would not reverence that holy majesty, who is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity—or, lastly, who would not dread his wrath that can consign him to eternal perdition, and earnestly desire his favour, who can crown him with glory and immortality?—

And, thus you see the different tendency of that ignorance under which the Heathens laboured, and that knowledge wherewith *Christians* are blessed—and that both these had, and always will have, their natural effects, (I don't say in every particular instance, but in the main) can never be denied, as long as men's judgments and opinions direct their actions; as long as we are influenced by love or gratitude, by wants and blessings, by hopes and fears.

And thus much for the first head I proposed to speak to, *viz.* that the world is amended by the *Christian*

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religion,

religion, on account of our having a better knowledge of God and the concerns of religion.

I proceed, in the next place, to shew that the world is amended by *Christianity*, on account of our worshipping God in a more pure and rational manner than the Heathens did.

First, then, the Heathen religion consisted almost entirely in rites and ceremonies, which were either insignificant to the purposes of true piety, or actually impious; such were their solemn feasts, which, however, they might answer many excellent purposes of religion in their original institution by Almighty God, for God appointed such to his own people; yet they quickly degenerated, in the imitation of the Heathen, into mere luxury and mirth; or served at best but to amuse the mind with pomp and pageantry, and really tended to corrupt



rupt it, by taking off the thoughts from true virtue.

Such also were their sacrifices, which, although in their primitive appointment by Almighty God, they had a natural efficacy, both to inspire true religion, and strike the soul with abhorrence of guilt; yet, when the reason of their institution was lost in the degenerate world, they answered no purpose of true religion, not to mention that they were many times the most monstrous barbarities and cruellest murders.

And, lastly, their auguries and oracles, which, though they implied some dependence upon the prescience of the Gods, yet it is beyond all doubt, that the world had been much better without them, not only because the auguries were so exceedingly senseless and superstitious, and the oracles so delusive and uncertain, and both so ill calculated

for the condition of humanity, and so utterly useless to the promotion of any one good purpose of life; but because, on the contrary, they took off the mind from virtue and industry, the natural means of gaining success and the favour of the Divinity.

But to be more particular—

In the first place, when we consider that prayer is the most rational and important part of devotion, and that the Heathens were exceedingly ignorant in that duty, we ought not to be surprized, if they failed to practise what they so little regarded or understood.—Now, concerning their ignorance in this point, we need inquire no farther than the doubts and perplexities of *Socrates*, the very wisest of them all, about it; together with his frank confession, that there needed some divine person to instruct mankind in that point.—Besides, that it was the fixed

fixed tenet of the *Stoics*, that it was needless to pray to the Gods for virtue and felicity, forasmuch as both these were already in their power.—

And, as for the *Peripatetics* and *Epicureans*, it is not probable they would trouble themselves to petition a providence, which, they believed, did not regard them.—

Add to all this, that some of the wisest of the Heathens affirmed prayer to be needless, even on a supposition of a providence; because, say they, if the suppliant be worthy, he will obtain what he wants without it; nay, the sooner, for not troubling the Gods with his importunity.—If he be unworthy, he will get nothing by his prayer, but will become more so, for molesting God with his petitions;—little considering that prayer is the very condition upon which God confers his blessings, and that for the highest reasons.—



*First*, Because it implies an acknowledgment of the divine Being and Attributes, and a dependence upon him for a supply of all our wants ;—

*Secondly*, Because it engages us to frequent reflections upon our corruption and unworthiness, and the infinite bounty, goodness, and mercy of God towards us.—And such reflections naturally inspire confusion and sorrow for sin, together with the strongest resolutions of amendment for the time to come.—Such reflections naturally inspire the mind with humility and meekness, with gratitude and benevolence; and these, as they are the noblest ornaments of the rational soul, so are they the most natural recommendations to the favour and protection of that great and glorious Being that governs the world, and are, at the same time, the sure foundations of every other virtue. And, therefore,

therefore, in the course of a man's prayers to God, as the duty extends itself to petition, intercession, and praise, his soul is actually in the exercise of every Christian and social virtue.

And, as to what is urged, that, if a man be worthy, he will obtain his wants without prayer, *Christianity* hath taught us the folly and presumption of such a doctrine, forasmuch as there is no such thing as worth or merit in the sight of God.

—The best men, and the best actions in the world are faulty and imperfect before him, who is of purer eyes than to behold iniquity; nor is there any relation of equality between our best performances and the favours of Almighty God bestowed in reward of them.

But, at the same time that the best men in the world have no title to the divine favour without prayer, the vilest and the worst are

recommended and accepted by it; inasmuch as every act of prayer is a complicated act of virtue; all virtue is founded in the mind, and the application and intention of the mind to the attainment of it (which is the business of prayer) is practising that virtue in the abstract, and is the only rational and effectual means of establishing true virtue in the soul.

Add to all this, that the *Christian* religion obliges us to serious and firm resolutions of renouncing our sins, before we presume to approach the throne of mercy, in prayer for them.—The *Christian* religion engages all those, that come to God, to quit their corruptions, and earnestly to endeavour after those graces and virtues, which prayer naturally tends to inspire into the soul, and which will not fail to recommend them to the favour and protection of a merciful and good God.

But



But farther, if we descend to the particulars of the heathen worship, we shall find them so cruel, so lewd, so corrupt, so abominable, that it is scarcely decent even to mention them to a *Christian* audience.—The offering of human sacrifices, how monstrous and unnatural soever that practice may now appear to the meanest *Christian*, yet was the known practice of almost all the heathen world; the *Gauls*, the *Germans*, the *Scythians*, the *Africans*, the *Phœnicians*, nay, and even the *Athenians* and *Romans*, devoted themselves to this abominable rite;—as we are assured from *Justin*, *Cæsar*, *Tacitus*, *Plutarch*, *Athenæus*, and several other writers of undoubted credit.—Nay, in many places they offered up even their young children, which *Tertullian* openly chargeth them with, in his *Apology*; and those tender years, which an enemy would spare, their  
 parents

parents sacrificed, and stood by with pipes and drums, to drown their dying cries.—And they that had no children of their own bought of the poor, for the same purpose.

And this corruption was so prevailing in the world, that even the *Jews*, the elect people of God, fell early and often into it.

I might add to this the cutting and wounding themselves with knives and launces in their devotions; as is recorded of the priests of *Baal*, in the first book of *Kings*, and is attested by *Herodotus*, in the rites of *Isis*\*—But these, and many other barbarities, however strange and senseless, are yet such civilities and refinements in devotion, compared with the above-mentioned murders and butcheries, that they scarce deserve our censure.

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\* *Herod. Euterpe*, p. 113. c. 61. Lond. Ed.

Their obscene rites were so numerous, that, if it were decent to explain, yet were it not easy to recount them—their *Floralia*, publicly celebrated for four days together, by naked prostitutes—their *Bacchanalia*, and feasts of *Ceres*, which, it seems, were too abominable to be exposed, and therefore, through shame, celebrated in the night, in all possible circumstances of corruption, as *Livy* assures us.—And yet these were solemnities observed, not only in *Greece* and *Rome*, but almost over the whole world.—And it was a received opinion, that those who were initiated in those mysteries, should dwell in the regions of the blessed, and have a pre-ludence over others—that is, in reality, that those who were most wicked in this world, should be most happy and most honoured in the next.

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The people of *Samos* and *Ephesus*, the *Phœnicians* and *Babylonians*, prostituted their daughters, in honour of *Venus*, before marriage; and the latter of these did it, as *Strabo* assures us, by the direction of an oracle. — He tells us also, that a like law obtained among the *Cyprians* and *Armenians* — and the accounts we have of the *Corinthians*, *Cappadocians*, the rites of the *Egyptian Isis* and *Adonis*, and many others, vary indeed the forms of corruption, but at the same time they are so far from being inferior to those already mentioned, that, in many instances, they exceed them.

If it were possible to enhance these hateful practices, they did it, in many places, by the abominable objects of their adoration, too deform, too vile, to be mentioned; attended with all possible obscenity of voice and gesture.

I might

I might add to all this their ridiculous ceremonies of lamenting the Gods they worshipped, as in the feasts of *Adonis* and *Proserpine*; of adoring by imprecations, as in the feast of *Hercules*; and by threats, as in the worship of the *Sun* and *Moon*.

And yet, as absurd, as impious, as abominable as these practices were, they were enjoined by the laws of those nations where they obtained; confirmed by their oracles, and supported both by the precepts and practice of their philosophers. — And, though *Socrates* was accused of despising the Gods of his country, yet he denies the charge, and orders a cock to be sacrificed to *Æsculapius*, at the very hour of his death, when he could be under no fears of declaring the truth.

That *Christians*, therefore, who worship God in spirit and truth, worship him in a more perfect and excellent

excellent manner, cannot need a proof: as needless also would it be to labour for arguments of the superior excellence of that religion, which abhors all cruelty and corruption; and guards, not only against the grosser practice, but against all thought and intention of evil; whose doctrine is, like its author, pure and perfect; tending, at once, to improve and to bless; correcting our errors, healing our infirmities, and ennobling our lives! the wisest and the best institution!—not consisting in profane, absurd, inhuman, abominable rites; but, on the contrary, enjoining universal purity of mind and manners; chastity and temperance, humility and meekness, frequent and fervent prayer, sincerity in our promises, bounty to the poor, mercy and love to all mankind! a religion which is able to make us very wise and very happy!—which reconciles us to God  
and



and to one another, and filleth the mind with that *peace which passeth all understanding*.—a religion of holy precepts and heavenly duties! that hath nothing corrupt, or mean, or mercenary in its composition.—That commendeth itself best to the consciences of the best and wisest of mankind.—That exacteth the highest veneration and esteem to which the most perfect wisdom and consummate goodness can be intitled! and is secure against every degree of calumny and contempt, except from the ignorant, who do not understand it; or the thoughtless, who will not attend to it; or the miscreant, who is condemned by it.

And thus having proved that *Christians* worship God in a much purer and more rational manner, than was practised in the heathen world, I hope the third proposition I proposed to speak to, *viz. that they are more moral in their lives,* cannot

cannot need a proof. — Forasmuch as the very worship of the Heathens enjoined the greatest immoralities, and the very worst that a *Christian* can now do, to offend and provoke God, was but what the Heathens did to obey and to appease him! among them, to worship was, in many instances, to be emphatically vicious. — Whereas, among us, every office of religion, every act of worship, is the practice of some one or more virtues; and therefore, if we ever serve God, or worship him as *Christians*, or even if we do not worship him, it is hardly possible we should be as corrupt and immoral as the Heathens were. And, indeed, if we consider that all religion consists in the imitation of the Deity; and that the Heathens were justified in the practice of the greatest immoralities, by the examples of their Gods; lying, murder, theft, fornication, adultery, incest, and other

other abominations not to be named, being countenanced by the practice of *Saturn*, *Jupiter*, *Venus*, *Mars*, and *Mercury*; we shall only have cause to wonder, not why they were so corrupt, but rather why they were not more so, if possible.

Add to this, that almost all these vices, and many more, were countenanced by their laws.—Thus it is notorious, that *Lycurgus*, the wisest and the best law-giver of *Sparta*, permitted theft, adultery, and other practices yet more abominable, and rendered them rather honourable and meritorious, than criminal and infamous in the eye of his law: and the *Romans*, a wise, and deemed a virtuous people, committed innumerable murders in their gladiatorial shews; allowed the causing of abortion, exposing their children, and self-murder; and, if such were the practice and permission of the best law-giver, and the wisest and most

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virtuous



virtuous of the heathen world, what may we not believe of the most ignorant and vicious among them? Whereas, with regard to *Christians*, as corrupt as the world is grown, yet, God be praised, vice and iniquity are not yet countenanced by our laws, but are under strong discouragements and restraints, and are attended, in some degree, with pain and infamy.

I might mention, to the same purpose, the assertions of their philosophers, that nothing was, by nature, good or evil; or, if there was, that it was impossible to be certain what was so; and, if we read *Dio- genes Laertius*, we shall find these opinions abundantly confirmed by the practice of almost all the wise men amongst them.

I might mention also, upon this occasion, the miserable condition, both of servitude and captivity, amongst them; the infinite cruelties  
and

and murders committed in both ;— the doctrine of revenge, maintained by some of the wisest and best of them; and the doctrine of doing evil, that good may come.—And, as the Heathens were allowed in the committal of almost all vices, there were many virtues, of great importance to mankind, which were in no sort of esteem amongst them; or, rather, which they had in the utmost contempt; particularly patience, humility, chastity, and temperance.—And, whereas it was their custom to erect temples in honour of those virtues which were had in esteem amongst them, *Plutarch* tells us, that even the *Romans* had no temples erected to two of those virtues, even so late as his time.\*

To all this may be added, that the world was never instructed in the duties of life, till the establish-

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\* *Vid.* Disc. concern. the Fort. of the *Rom.*

ment of *Christianity*, over the face of the earth; that is, no teachers were regularly appointed to teach and to instruct mankind in the several virtues and duties they owed to God and to their own species, to themselves and to the society they lived in, till the ministers of *Christ* published his blessed Gospel to the world.—And therefore it is not to be wondered, if the Heathen were grossly ignorant and negligent in the nature and practice of those duties, in which they had never been, in any degree, sufficiently informed and instructed, and to which they never were properly exhorted.

But, when all the corruption and superstition of the heathen religion came to be applied to their rulers and emperors, and centered in their worship, then followed an intire and irresistible depravation of manners.—Superstition first supplanted true religion; and, when it had run its



its utmost length of absurdity and iniquity, flattery supplanted superstition, and carried it on to all the possibilities of corruption ! for, whereas superstition prevails most in weak minds, flattery, idolatrous flattery, could only obtain in such as were intirely profligate and abandoned ! and, whereas all religion consists, as I before observed, in imitation, when their adoration was devolved upon their princes, then to be religious was to be the worst men, or, rather, the greatest monsters in nature.

In this condition *Christianity* found the world : our blessed Saviour was crucified under *Tiberius*, and his apostles and followers published his doctrine under *Caligula*, *Nero*, and the rest of those monsters, who affected adoration and altars.—And, whether the world be not amended from these abominations, and from infinite other corruptions that reign-

ed in it before, we may appeal to its greatest enemies.—And very pertinent, and full to this purpose, is the testimony of that great heathen apostate *Julian* the emperor, who, in his letter to *Arsacius*, the Pontifex of *Galatia*, ascribes the progress of *Christianity* to that sanctity of life and universal charity which its professors put on.—And, therefore, he exhorts *Arsacius* to oblige the heathen priests, either by threats or reason, to be men of conscience and honesty; and to require the same of all under their care; or, otherwise, to degrade them from the priesthood.

The conclusion from all this is clear and obvious—

If humble prayer and supplication to God, in all emergencies and upon all occasions, be preferable to the cold neglect of him; if gratitude, to insensibility and ingratitude; —if humble obeysance, to insolent threats;

threats; if purity, to pollution; if decent ceremonies, to barbarous and cruel rites; if praise, to reproach; if blessing, to execration; if a contrite heart, to a mangled carcase; if the devotion of our soul, to the fruit of our body; if mercy to mankind be preferable to murder; if chaste hallelujahs, to obscene songs; if rational joy, to ridiculous lamentation; if the great Creator, to the vilest creatures; if the Lord of hosts, to a hero; if the Sovereign of heaven, to the rulers of the earth; then is the present worship purer than the ancient; then is *Christianity* preferable to heathenism; and the world is infinitely amended by it, both in the knowledge and practice of religion.—And, if it be yet a question, whether mankind are also amended by it in their morals, it is, however, a plain question of fact, of which every man in his



senses is as good a judge as the wisest man in the world.

I have shewn you the corruptions publicly practised, permitted, and enjoined, by the precepts of religion and laws of the land, all over the heathen world:—the question then is, Whether the same corruptions be publicly practised, permitted, and enjoined, under the sanctions of law or religion, all over the *Christian* world?

For example—

Is there any *Christian* country wherein people are enjoined by their religion to prostitute their daughters before marriage? Are fornication, theft, adultery, and viler abominations, publicly encouraged by the legislature of any *Christian* country upon the face of the earth?—Is it allowed among us to cause abortions, or to expose children from their birth to dogs, and wolves, and vultures?—Is it allowable, among

us,

us, to murder men or children in public sacrifices, or to divert ourselves with public murders upon our stages?—Are masters allowed to hang, or drown, or torture their servants with impunity, and at their pleasure?—Or do we murder captives taken in war, by thousands?—or commit them to the more cruel consumptions of quarries, mills, and mines? And, if we do not, if no one of all these corruptions be publicly enjoined, permitted, or practised amongst us—Are there yet any infidels so hardened, and so abandoned, as to say the world is not amended by the *Christian* religion?—In one word, to deny that mankind are reformed, are greatly reformed, in their morals, by the *Christian* religion, is to deny, that the will is ever guided or restrained by the conviction of the judgment.—It is to affirm, that laws cannot oblige, nor discipline restrain, nor rewards encourage,

courage, nor punishments deter, nor example influence.—It is to affirm, that mankind are incapable of correction or amendment from the most perfect precepts, the most authoritative prohibitions, and the most powerful exhortations.—It is to affirm, that proofs cannot convince; that certainty is as uncertainty; that corrupt notions of God are as perfective of morality as pure.—It is to affirm, that a free commiserating power will have no more influence upon our lives than a fixed, inexorable fate; nor a wise presiding Providence than a careless, indolent divinity; nor a rational expectation than a fabulous hope. In one word, it is to affirm, that all things in nature have lost their natural tendencies and powers.—It is to deny facts, plain facts, of which every man alive is a judge.—It is grossly and stupidly to contradict the histories



ries of all ages, and the testimony of enemies.

And, when this is once well considered, how amazing are these bold and open attempts, every day made upon us, to introduce irreligion and atheism. — Good God! that men should be so abandoned, should be at once so abandoned and so ignorant, as to attempt to bring us back to heathenism. For what are all the attempts to destroy *Christianity* from amongst us, but so many plain attempts to introduce all the corruptions and abominations of the heathen world? And it is a well known fact, that, when *Julian*, the *Roman emperor*, became an apostate from *Christianity*, he did all that lay in his power to bring back and establish all the pollutions and abominations which reigned in the heathen world before the *Christian* religion was taught and took place in it.

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But what is most provoking, and, indeed, beyond all bearing, upon this head, is this, that men should dare to attempt this under the pretence of more light of reason and enlarged abilities! to remove ignorance, and introduce wisdom! when it is clear to a demonstration, that, as such attempts can only arise from gross corruption and conceited ignorance, so must they, if they succeeded, of necessity, end there—of necessity end in the extremes of both.

What the world would be, if it lost *Christianity*, is best seen by what it was when it wanted it—and by what it is where it still wants it.—If darkness and corruption, then, universally overspread it; and that too in their wisest and most learned ages and nations; and still overspreads it wherever it prevails not: I should be glad to learn of those wise men, how they were, or how they

they can be removed, otherwise than by the light of the Gospel.— And the real truth is, that, whatever abominations the *Christian* preachers of the Gospel had not been able to exterminate from the earth, the first *Christian* emperor, *Constantine the Great*, did totally and effectually exterminate, with a zeal truly pure and *Christian*, as far as his power and information reached.—And, if we are not altogether as corrupt and ignorant as the heathen world was and is, will these men pretend to tell us what advantage we have over them, as moral agents, except what is derived to us from that heavenly light!—And must we be robbed of that only advantage?—God forbid.

And yet, when I reflect upon the world about me, and consider the infinite enormities that reign in it, I am almost tempted to retract:—  
the



the avarice — the falshood — the fraud — the pride — the luxury — the cruelty — the corruption of every kind! — How many amongst us are at this day heathens and idolaters in their practice, and shew no other signs of religion than in their open and avowed devotions to luxury and intemperance, to riot and revenge, and ill-got gain; that is, in effect, to *Bacchus*, and *Venus*, and *Mars*, and *Mercury*! — How many make a god of their riches, and devote their souls and bodies to the *Mammon of unrighteousness*! — How many are professed *Epicureans* and *Sceptics*, indulge their pleasures, and reject the providence of God from ruling over them! — How many are, like the vilest of the heathen, actually sinning in the most solemn offices of religion; committing adultery and fornication in their hearts, and sacrificing the lives of their fellow-creatures to the fierce *Moloch*.

*Meloch* of their own pride and ambition!—Good God! that we should live so as to make it yet a question, whether we are better than Heathens—But, supposing we are not quite so corrupt, as indeed it is scarcely possible we should, is this our excellence?—Is this our boasted pre-eminence, that we are not altogether as bad as Heathens; that we are not sunk into the last and lowest corruption?—Whereas the true question is, Are we in any degree reformed in proportion to the advantages we have over them!—If religion consists in imitation, and the Heathens were corrupt as the deities they adored, or the monsters whom they deified!—Are we holy, as our God is holy! are we, like him, true and just, and merciful?—Do we study to be perfect, as our Father, which is in heaven, is perfect? If we do not, will the superior privileges and advantages of *Christianity* avail

avail us any thing? Will they serve us to any other purpose, than to aggravate our guilt, and inflame our punishment, at the great day of account? Are we more knowing, only in order to be more miserable for ever?

My brethren, how terrible a reflection is it to turn the greatest blessings into the greatest calamity and curse!—the greatest blessings, that infinite goodness can bestow, into the greatest calamity that infinite justice can inflict! to be made, by our blessed Saviour *Jesus Christ, heirs of salvation*, and to become, by our sins, *sons of perdition*!—to be intitled (through the merits and mediation of our Redeemer) to eternal happiness, and to be plunged (through our own demerits) into eternal misery, *where the worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched!*

From which dismal and unutterable woe God of his infinite mercy



cy deliver us all, through the merits and mediation of *Jesus Christ*.

—And,

Grant us therefore, O merciful God, that we may cast away the works of darkness, and put upon us the armour of light—grant us, of thine infinite mercy, that, as we perceive and know the things that belong to our peace, so we may have grace and power faithfully to fulfil the same, through the merits and mediation of thy Son, our blessed Lord and Saviour, *Jesus Christ*.

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## S E R M O N XIII.

The Presence of Christ upon Earth,  
after the Resurrection, abundant-  
ly attested, and the Truth of it  
ensured to all Humanity.  
With Matter enough for more than  
one Discourse.

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1 Cor. Chap. xv. Ver. 6.

After that he was seen of above four  
hundred brethren at once, of whom  
the greater part remain unto this  
present, but some are fallen asleep.

SINCE our Saviour Jesus Christ  
came into the world, died, and  
rose again from the dead, for the  
redemption and salvation of all man-  
kind; and since his credit, both as  
Prophet

## S E R M O N · XIII.

The Presence of *Christ* upon Earth,  
after the Resurrection, abundantly  
attested, and the Truth of it  
ensured to all Futurity.

With Matter enough for more than  
one Discourse.

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1 Cor. Chap. xv. Ver. 6.

*After that he was seen of above five  
hundred brethren at once, of whom  
the greater part remain unto this  
present, but some are fallen asleep.*

SINCE our Saviour *Jesus Christ*  
came into the world, died, and  
rose again from the dead, for the  
redemption and salvation of all man-  
kind; and since his credit, both as  
U 2                      a Prophet



a Prophet and as a Saviour, depended intirely upon his resurrection from the dead; 'twas fit, that a fact, of the last consequence to the truth and certainty of the *Christian* religion, should be attested and evidenced in such a manner as to make it most credible to the bulk of mankind, and, consequently, most advantageous; and to remove all reason of doubt concerning it from the minds of rational inquirers. — And the business of this discourse shall be to examine these two points:

First, To inquire whether this fact was so attested as to remove all reason of doubt from fair and rational inquirers concerning it.

And, Secondly, To inquire whether any other manner of attestation would have made it more credible to the bulk of mankind.

First, then, Any fact must be allowed sufficiently evidenced, and so

as

*after the Resurrection, attested. 293*

as to remove all reason of doubt from the minds of rational inquirers, when it is foretold, at a proper distance before it comes to pass, and when the event is fully attested by a sufficient number of credible witnesses after it hath come to pass.

Indeed, other facts are accounted sufficiently and incontestably evidenced, if they are supported by a competent testimony even when they are come to pass; but as this was a fact, in the evidence of which the bulk of mankind were more nearly interested, it became the wisdom of God to give it a more extraordinary attestation; and, in order to this, our Saviour frequently and publicly foretold this event, with all the extraordinary circumstances attending it: Thus we read, in the 16th chapter of St. Matthew, at the 21st verse, that *from that time forth Jesus began to shew to his disciples, how that he must go to Jerusalem,*

294 *Christ's Presence upon Earth,*  
*rusalem, and suffer many things of*  
*the Elders, and Chief Priests, and*  
*Scribes, and be killed, and be raised*  
*again the third day. — And what*  
*St. Matthew tells us he spoke to his*  
*disciples, St. Mark assures us, in the*  
*8th chapter and 31st and 32d verses,*  
*He spoke openly, (that is, publicly to*  
*the people) and he began to teach*  
*them, that the Son of Man must suf-*  
*fer many things, and be rejected of*  
*the Elders, and the Chief Priests, and*  
*Scribes, and be killed, and after*  
*three days rise again. — And he spake*  
*that saying openly. — And the same*  
*thing is again repeated by the Evan-*  
*gelists, six or seven several times,*  
*upon several occasions; so that ne-*  
*ver was any event more clearly,*  
*more fully, or more frequently fore-*  
*told, than this; and that this event*  
*was not only foretold to the dis-*  
*ciples and followers of our Saviour,*  
*but preached publicly, and suffici-*  
*ently known to his enemies, appears*  

not



*after the Resurrection, attested. 295*

not only from the proofs now produced, but likewise from the application made by the priests and Pharisees to *Pilate*, to obtain a guard upon his sepulchre in order to secure his body there beyond the time appointed for his resurrection; as you may read in the 27th chapter of *St. Matthew* at the 62d and following verses: — *Now the next day that followed the day of preparation, (viz. on the Sabbath) the Chief Priests and Pharisees came together to Pilate, saying, Sir, we remember that that deceiver said, whilst he was yet alive, After three days I will rise again. — Command therefore the sepulchre to be made sure until the third day, lest his disciples come by night and steal him away, and say to the people, He is risen from the dead; so the last error shall be worse than the first. — Pilate said unto them, Ye have a watch, go your way, and make it as sure as you can. So they went*

296. *Christ's Presence upon Earth,*  
*and made the sepulchre sure, sealing*  
*the stone, and setting a watch.*

From hence it clearly appears, that this event was not only fully foretold, but foretold to enemies, powerful and bitter enemies; and, no doubt, foretold for that very end, that they might endeavour (as they did to the utmost of their power) to defeat it! and yet, notwithstanding all their precaution, though they were forewarned and forearmed, this event did come to pass; and that it did so appears from the clearest and most incontestable evidence summed up by St. Paul in this chapter, whereof my text is a part: *For (says he) I delivered to you, first of all, that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures; and that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the Scriptures; and that he was seen (i. e. after his resurrection)*

*after the Resurrection, attested. 297*  
tion) of Cephas, then of the twelve.  
— After that he was seen of above  
five hundred brethren at once; after  
that he was seen of James; then of  
all the Apostles. — And, last of all,  
he was seen of me also, as one born  
out of due time.

Now a fact, witnessed by a com-  
petent number of persons, is allow-  
ed to be clearly and convincingly  
attested, when it appears, that the  
persons so attesting could not pos-  
sibly be deceived themselves, and  
cannot reasonably be suspected of  
a design to deceive others. — Now  
that the disciples could not be de-  
ceived themselves is evident, because  
our Saviour appeared to them several  
times after his resurrection; dis-  
coursed a considerable time with  
them; eat and drank with them  
twice, and made them feel and  
handle him, to convince them that  
they were not imposed upon by an  
apparition; and made Thomas, whose  
infidelity



infidelity was of great use for our satisfaction in this case, to feel; not only to view the print of the nails in his hands, but also to put his fingers into them, and to thrust his hand into his side; so that they had all the grounds of assurance and conviction that it was possible for them to have! 'Tis plain then they could not be deceived themselves.

And that they could not intend to deceive others is as evident: — First, Because they were plain, artless, honest men; nor can they suffer under a contrary imputation with the least colour of reason; and, doubtless, 'twas for this reason that our Saviour chose the greater part of those Apostles, who were to witness this truth, and preach his Gospel to the Heathen, from a country which had constant commerce and intercourse with them, thence called *Galilee* of the Gentiles; as he did *St. Paul* afterwards from *Cilicia*,  
that

that the Gentile world might have a fairer opportunity of inquiring into the honesty and veracity of those persons that were to attest the truth of his miracles, mission, and resurrection, to them ! And as to that Apostle, whose residence was fixed at *Jerusalem*, and was to preach those truths in a more particular manner to the *Jews*, namely, St. *James* the Less, surnamed the *Just* ; his singular innocence and integrity, his exemplary piety and purity of manners, hath always been acknowledged by the *Jews* themselves ; in-  
somuch that the signal calamities, which fell upon that people soon after his murder and martyrdom for *Christ*, is ascribed, by one of their own historians, to the wrath of God, drawn down upon them for the blood of that just and holy man. —  
In the next place, the Apostles cannot be justly suspected of a design to deceive and delude the world, be-  
cause

cause they could have no rational prospect of gaining credit to so strange an assertion as the resurrection of *Christ*, had they known it to be false. — They, that impose upon the world, always do it under the semblance of truth; imposture can only be supported by appearances; and that surely must be a strange delusion, that despises probability, and neglects its only support! And therefore they who vouch facts, not only without appearance or probability, but directly against them, and yet vouch them to their own danger and disadvantage, must do it from conviction; such attestations can only be extorted by truth. — And therefore when we see the Apostles attesting the resurrection of *Christ*, to the open and immediate hazard of their reputation, their liberties, and their lives, without any motive of interest, or honour, or advantage, of any kind,

but



but quite the contrary; — Is it possible to suspect them of imposture? — Arraign them of their folly or phrenzy, if you please, till the conduct of their lives, and the wisdom of their writings, convince you of your error; but you must, at the same time, acquit them of imposture, because a combination in fraud, that can answer no end, will always be a senseless supposition.

However, let us, for argument sake, suppose these twelve to have been weak, or mad enough, to endeavour to impose upon others in this point, against their own interest, and at the hazard of their own destruction; — Will this remove the difficulty? Will it not be asked, By what arts was it possible for them to convince others? — Can it be imagined, that twelve fools and madmen could impose on five hundred people at once, and make them

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them believe, against the evidence of all their senses, that they saw and heard that very *Jesus* now alive, whom, a few days before, they beheld a breathless corpse, first, upon the cross, and then in the grave. All this is absurd and impossible to be imagined, even by infidelity, which is as credulous without and against reason, as it is hardened and blind to it! — And the same arguments, that could be raised to invalidate the testimony of those twelve, and these five hundred, would hold as well against the testimony of twelve thousand, or five millions, or any assignable number! — For a number of witnesses is only necessary to a certain degree, *i. e.* so far as to remove all danger of error, ignorance, or corruption, in relation to what they assert; and all suspicion of combination in frauds? Now that even the twelve could neither deceive, nor be deceived, hath already

ready

ready been shewn; and, if the twelve could not, much less could the the five hundred mentioned in my text.

And from all this, I hope, it is evident, that this fact of our Saviour's resurrection was attested in such a manner as to remove all reason of doubt from all candid and rational inquirers concerning it; which was the first thing to be proved.

I proceed now, in the next place, to inquire whether any other method of attesting this fact would have made it more credible to the bulk of mankind.---And

The only method that can be conceived more likely to attain this end would be, if our Saviour had appeared openly and frequently to the whole body of the *Jewish* nation---For, as to his appearing to the Gentile world, or any part of it, where he was not known before  
his



his death, the truth of his resurrection would then rest upon the same foundation that it did without his appearing to them; that is, upon the testimony of those persons that knew him well before his death, and saw and conversed with him after his resurrection; for, doubtless, they would have no regard to his own testimony in this case.

And, therefore, the only imaginable method by which our Saviour could make this fact of his resurrection more evident to the rest of the world, would be by his appearing openly to the whole nation of the *Jews*. --- And that such an appearance as this would not have the desired effect I think very evident. --- For, if he had appeared thus to the *Jews*, he either had convinced them, or he had not; and, either way, the fact had been less credible to the rest of mankind. --- 1st, If he  
had

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had not convinced them, they then would have been witnesses against the Apostles; and, when the Apostles had affirmed that the Lord was risen, the rest of the Jews would have affirmed that they also had seen him as well as these, and that he was not the man. And 'tis highly probable, that, if he had appeared in the manner now mentioned, he would not have convinced, at least not converted, those creatures that were so blind and hardened, both to the divinity of his doctrine and miracles; but that they would impute this miracle, as they did all the rest, to the power and delusion of *Beelzebub*; or say of him, at best, as they did of the man born blind, whom *Jesus* healed, and who had lived all his life in the midst of them; some said, *it was he*; and others, *that he was like him*.

And, in this case, it is evident the truth of our Saviour's resurrection

X

had

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had been vastly less evident to the  
rest of mankind.

But suppose the best that could  
happen, and that our Saviour's open  
appearance to the *Sanhedrim* had  
convinced them of the divinity of  
his mission and the reality of his re-  
surrection, yet, even this way, the fact  
had been infinitely less credible to  
the rest of mankind, for many reasons.

First, Because the *Jews* were a  
nation hated and despised by the  
rest of the world; for as this people  
were obliged, by their law, to sepa-  
rate themselves from the customs  
and manners of their neighbours, on  
the score of religion; so, from their  
opinion of being themselves the elect  
and favourite people of Almighty  
God, they treated all other nations  
as dogs and outcasts. And this aver-  
sion and contempt was, as it was  
natural, retorted upon them by the  
rest of mankind, who regarded them  
as an odd, proud, singular, super-  
stitious



*after the Resurrection, attested. 307*

stitious race, given up to believe fables and falsehoods! and, indeed, they had, by this time, added so many senseless legends to their law by their traditions, and were, at the same time, so corrupt in their morals, that the opinion of their stupid credulity was well founded: for as candour and simplicity of mind and manners readily dispose men to the reception of truth, which is of a plain and simple nature, and has something in it congenial to such an honest temper and disposition of mind;—so corruption and depravity of mind and manners naturally dispose men to the admission of falsehood and error! for it is the interest of such men that truth should not take place; for truth and honesty have a necessary and inseparable connexion. — And, therefore, dishonest and depraved minds readily yield assent to every thing that favours their own corruptions, how-

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ever improbable or absurd! at the same time that they withhold and deny their assent to the clearest reasonings and most evident truths that make strongly against them!

Hence it is that infidels are notoriously credulous, as was remarkable of *Julian* the apostate! that creature, who would not assent to the truth of those divine prophecies so well attested, and some of which were so signally fulfilled before his eyes, was yet the veriest dupe and slave to all the follies and superstitions of magic.—And many that reject *Moses's* account of the creation, at this day, however plain and rational, will readily subscribe to *Epicurus's*, though demonstrably senseless and absurd.

Now that the *Jews* were very corrupt at this time is sufficiently known; and that they were accounted credulous, to a proverb, appears from other circumstances; so particularly

*after the Resurrection, attested.* 369

particularly from that passage in the satyrift, where, speaking of something he thought false and monstrous, to shew that it was utterly incredible, he adds, — *Credat Judæus apella—non ego.*—*Let a circumcised Jew believe it—not I!* And, from this character of the Jewish nation, 'tis evident, that, had they affirmed that a man, whom they put to death, was now come to life again, the rest of the world would have exploded the story with one voice, and numbered this among their other follies and fables.—Or, what is full as bad,—they would have imputed the whole to craft and contrivance, and treated our Saviour's whole history as one chain of fraud contrived to carry on a national interest, especially at this time, when they were in universal expectation of this *Messiah*, who was to be a very extraordinary person, and to appear in a very extraordinary manner; was, as



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they reported, to deliver them from the yoke of their enemies, and to have given them dominion over the whole world.

And this the Heathens well knew, as appeareth both from *Suetonius* and *Tacitus*;—and therefore, if the *Jews* had acknowledged the truth of this extraordinary person's resurrection, whom *Pilate* knew to be called the king of the *Jews*, is it not evident, that the whole series of his wonderful life, and pretended death, and miraculous resurrection, had been imputed to one continued scheme of national craft, and, consequently, had been infinitely less credible to mankind at this day.

But, *Secondly*,—Had the *Jews* been convinced and converted by our Saviour's resurrection, the *Christian* religion had wanted many of those arguments and motives of credibility that now distinguish it above all other religions, and demonstra-  
tively

*after the Resurrection, attested.* 311  
tively support it against the opposition of its enemies.

For, First, the Apostles were, for the most part, men of such low education, and such remarkable simplicity of mind and manners, as made it impossible for them to devise a scheme of extraordinary subtlety and craft; and *St. Paul* (the only just exception to this observation) was not added to the number of Apostles till the truth of *Christianity* was openly and abundantly attested by all the rest: whereas the Scribes and Pharisees, the Rabbies and Doctors of the law, were men remarkably sharp and subtle, and might very well be suspected of forming a skilful and dextrous scheme.

Again, the Apostles had no interest in what they delivered, but preached the doctrine of the resurrection to the manifest hazard of their lives and fortunes; nay, in fact, most of them did so to the

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real loss of both : — whereas the  
*Jews* might justly be thought to  
have a national interest in the pro-  
pagation of such a doctrine, as I  
before observed.

And, besides this, had men, cho-  
sen by the *Sanhedrim*, been appoint-  
ed to propagate this belief, the  
preaching of *Christianity* had then  
been an employment of the highest  
honour and profit among them, be-  
cause the *Christian* priesthood would  
then have probably succeeded to the  
*Mosaic*, and, every one knows, the  
priesthood was the highest dignity,  
in that state, next to the regal ; —  
and that the teachers and expound-  
ers of the law were in the first rank  
of honour and esteem amongst  
them ; and, though some of them  
should have preached this doctrine  
to the heathen world, at the hazard  
of their lives, yet there had been  
nothing, in such a resolution, re-  
markably exceeding the force of such



*after the Resurrection, attested. 313*

a temptation: men go up to the mouth of a cannon upon worse terms every day, and yet in no wise for the conscience of the cause they are engaged in.

Again, as the *Jews* were interested and subtle, so were they likewise very wicked and corrupt, as I have before observed, and as their own historian *Josephus* attests. Hence it is that both *St. John* and our Saviour are so frequent in their reproaches upon them, under the characters of hypocrites, an adulterous generation, and a generation of vipers. — And *Jesus Christ* addeth, that they had made the law of none effect by their traditions, *i. e.* they had glossed away all the obligations to morality and purity of manners, which the law was intended to teach and to oblige men to. — And persons of this character might very well be suspected of a design to deceive and impose upon others, especially in a point where their own interest

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terest might be greatly concerned.—  
Nay, more than this, many of them  
were corrupt enough to deny the  
truth in time of persecutions; and  
such denial, especially of a fact so  
little credible in itself, had certainly  
outweighed all the testimonies to  
the contrary.

Again — had *Christianity* been  
established in the world, from the  
conversion and attestation of the  
*Jewish* nation, it had then been sup-  
ported intirely by testimony, human  
testimony; whereas now it is also  
supported by miracles, God himself  
bearing witness to it both with signs  
and wonders, and with divers miracles  
and gifts of the Holy Ghost, poured  
out upon the first teachers of it, ac-  
cording to his own blessed will.—  
Or, if you suppose that it might  
still have been supported by mira-  
cles, I desire it may be considered,  
that, if those miracles had been  
wrought by a whole nation, or even  
by

*after the Resurrection, attested.* 313

by the teachers of a whole nation, their commonness would have discharged their character, and they would have lost their names; and, with that, all their force of conviction!

Add to all this, that if the united power, learning, and industry of that nation, who were then a considerable people, had made the truth of the *Christian* religion credible to the rest of the world, *Christianity* would then have been upon worse terms, in this respect, than *Mahometanism* is now; for that was propagated by a people much less considerable than the *Jews*, and utterly ignorant and illiterate; nay the *Christian* religion would have wanted one of the greatest and noblest arguments of its coming from God; I mean the miraculous propagation of it by the preaching of a few mean, weak, ignorant, contemptible men, in opposition to the united passions, prejudice,



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judice, power, learnings, and wisdom  
of the whole world.

And thus you see the wisdom of  
God's shewing him openly whom  
he had raised from the dead, *not to  
all the people*, as St. Peter expresseth  
it, *but unto witnesses chosen before of  
God*; witnesses that could not be  
deceived, and were too honest, too  
numerous, too simple, and too dis-  
interested, to combine to deceive  
others.—Many of these *Jews*, who  
were hated and persecuted by their  
own nation on that account, and,  
consequently, less to be suspected by  
the Gentiles; doubtless some of them  
also Gentiles, and therefore more  
readily credited by their brethren,  
especially in any thing they should  
affirm in opposition to the *Jewish*  
nation!—whereas, had they affirm-  
ed with the *Jews*, in all probability,  
they had been as much disregarded,  
and considered under the same con-  
tempt as proselytes of the gate.

Add

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Add to this, that these several witnesses were intirely opposite to one another, both in their principles and persuasions, and, consequently, less capable, and less to be suspected of combination.

To say nothing of *St. Paul*, the known enemy and professed persecutor of the *Christian* name, appointed, by a miraculous and public conversion, to be a zealous advocate and bold champion of the *Christian* cause!

And thus I have endeavoured to evince the two points proposed at the beginning of this discourse—First, I have shewn, that our Saviour's resurrection is a fact attested in such a manner as to remove all reason of doubt, from all fair and rational inquirers, concerning it.—

And, Secondly, that no other manner of attestation would have made it more credible to the bulk of mankind.—Quite otherwise, that which,  
in

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in all human probability, would have made it more credible, would, in truth, have intirely destroyed *Christianity*, or, at best, robbed it of some of the clearest and noblest proofs of its divinity and truth, and such as demonstrated it neither the effect of human force nor policy, but, as *St. Paul* truly and nobly expresses it, — *the power of God, and the wisdom of God!*

Human policy would have conducted this whole affair in a quite different manner; human wisdom would have chosen men of the best learning and strongest understanding; men of flowing eloquence and dextrous address:—but *the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God*; and God, as *St. Paul* assures us, *i Cor. chap. i. chose the foolish things of the world, to confound the wise; and the weak, to confound the mighty; that no flesh should glory in his presence.*—He chose those to declare  
his



*after the Resurrection, attested. 319*

his will, and bear testimony to his *Christ*, whose preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power; that your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God.

From the doctrine of my text we may infer the importance of that duty, so often recommended in the Scriptures, and so necessary to the enjoyment of life and a good conscience! I mean the duty of humble resignation to the dispensations of the divine providence! the neglect of which, in the case before us, involved the whole *Jewish* nation then under such dreadful calamities, and their miserable posterity, ever since, under so fatal and signal a curse as makes them at once the pity and the scorn of mankind to this day.— God knows, they had proofs enough of our Saviour's resurrection; they were sufficiently forewarned; they rolled

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rolled a great stone to the tomb, they sealed it, and set a watch of sixty soldiers to guard it; his disciples were fled and dispersed, and durst not shew their faces; all this, with the express prediction and preceding miracles, were surely abundantly sufficient to convince men that made use of their reason; nor could God do more, unless he would extort their conviction.—He has done enough to make their belief very easy, and their infidelity very criminal! And yet, for all this, because this dispensation of the divine providence did not come to pass exactly in the manner their carnal hearts suggested it should, they shut their eyes and their ears against it.—God Almighty promised the *Messiah* as a blessing to all mankind; and he appeared in the only condition and character wherein he could be so—a teacher, to instruct mankind by the purest precepts and the most perfect

*after the Resurrection, attested.* 321

perfect example—and a redeemer, to deliver them from guilt and the vengeance due to it!—but the *Jews* expected him, as a blessing to them, distinct from and in opposition to, the rest of mankind; a Saviour that should set them upon the necks of their enemies, and give them dominion over the world; *i. e.* a Saviour that should be a blessing to them, and a curse to the rest of the creation.—And, indeed, we are all of us too much *Jews*, in this respect; nor is there any thing more common in life, than to see men daily renounce and repine at those dispensations of the divine Providence which are evidently intended for their advantage, merely because they do not exactly fall in with their own fond expectations, and the weak suggestions of their corrupt hearts.—And I doubt not but there are, even in this audience, who, from the arrogance of humanity, have, at

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one time or other of their lives, thought lightly of this very article of our faith, and foundation of our hope,—the resurrection of *Jesus* from the dead, merely from the seemingly mean and low manner of God's manifestation of it to mankind! that is, in truth, they have quarrelled with it, on account of that infinite and adorable wisdom by which it was conducted! And yet this very arrogance is more excusable; it is less absurd to arraign the wisdom of God, than to admit and despise it.—Oh, my brethren!—if the infidelity of the *Jews* has thrown them under the severe displeasure of God, how dreadful must those judgments be that await the impiety of *Christians*?—*How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation?*—The Apostle assureth us, that, *if we sin wilfully, after that we have received the knowledge of the truth*, i. e. if we shut our eyes against the light and truth  
of

*after the Resurrection, attested: 323*

of the Gospel, after it hath once been fully preached and evidenced to us, *there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation.* Heb. chap. x. ver. 26.

My brethren, can ye hear this dreadful sentence denounced against infidelity, without astonishment and horror? Can ye reflect, that ye dwell among the sons of perdition; that ye live in an age where blasphemies are publicly and triumphantly vend-  
ed; that many of your places of public resort are, in truth, seminaries of avowed impiety and prophane-  
ness, where every thing serious and sacred are exploded with contempt and scorn! where the truth and pu-  
rity of your holy religion are equally the object of insult and derision! *that* truth, the noblest that this world was ever blessed with, the most perfective of human nature, and the most worthy the purity

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and perfection of God! *that* truth,  
which hath infinitely more evidence,  
clearer, fuller, more incontestable  
demonstration, than any fact from  
the foundation of the world to this  
day, is yet treated as if it was mere  
delusion and imposture!

To triumph on the side of evi-  
dence, and from a conscious supe-  
riority of genius, and greater extent  
of knowledge, is a pardonable, at  
least a tolerable pride; but to in-  
sult, as infidelity demonstrably doth,  
from narrowness of genius, from  
contracted thoughts, and dark un-  
derstandings, against the clearest and  
best informed! to insult after end-  
less confutations and repeated de-  
feats, is insult past enduring! but,  
since God seeth good to bear with  
it, it is highly fitting we should.  
And yet how highly were it to be  
wished, by us short-sighted mortals,  
that these unruly dupes of pride  
were brought to a right understand-  
ing,



*after the Resurrection, attested. 325*

ing, that the patience and long-suffering of Almighty God should give no security to sinners, but quite the contrary.

There is nothing more dreadful, there is nothing so dreadful, in all the dealings of God with mankind, as when he is said to suffer them to go on in their guilt; *to fill up the measure of their iniquities, to treasure up wrath against the day of wrath, and the revelation of the righteous judgments of God.*

Seeing then, my Christian brethren, *that we have a great High-priest, who is passed into the heavens to prepare a place for us, Jesus Christ, the Son of God—let us hold fast our profession of faith in him without wavering, and consider one another, to provoke to love and to good works; and take heed lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief, in departing from the living God; but exhort one another daily,*

Y 3

*whilst*

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*whilst it is called to-day, lest any of*  
*you be hardened by the deceitfulness*  
*of sin.* From which dreadful infa-  
tuation God, of his infinite mer-  
cy, &c,

S E R-

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## S E R M O N XIV.

The Vanity of all but *Christian*  
Philosophy.

Two Discourses.

*Coloss.* chap. ii. ver. 8.

*Beware lest any one spoil you through  
philosophy and vain deceit, after  
the traditions of men, after the  
rudiments of the world, and not  
after Christ.*

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**H**APPINESS has been the  
aim and endeavour of philo-  
sophy and human wisdom in all ages;  
but how insufficient all wisdom,  
barely human, has ever been to this  
end, is evident from hence, that



the complaint of dissatisfaction and disappointment has always been as universal as the pursuit.

And the reason of this was, that, without an exprefs revelation from God, 'twas impossible for us to know the true state and condition of our nature, how to support ourselves under all the calamities of life, and the terror of death; how to heal the wounds of conscience, and expiate the horrors of guilt; and how to satisfy the longings and cravings of the soul after immortality.

Since therefore this revelation is now made, and the *Christian* religion is exprefsly calculated to promote the happiness of mankind to the highest pitch we are capable of in this world, and to perfect and perpetuate it in the next, it was with good reason that the Apostle cautions the *Colossians*, and in them all *Christians*, to take care that they did

did not suffer themselves to be robbed of the prospects and rewards of their holy religion, by attaching themselves to any opinions of philosophy, or any schemes of wisdom whatsoever, except that wisdom which was from above, the philosophy which is after *Christ*: *Beware, &c.*

That mankind should bewilder themselves in a vain pursuit of happiness, before they were enlightened from above, is not at all to be wondered at; but that they should continue under the same delusion, notwithstanding the guidance of a divine revelation, nay, and in direct opposition to it, is an unhappy proof of the weakness and vanity of human nature.

And yet it is but too notorious, that some of those who imagine themselves the wisest of mankind, are still deluded to think they can find out schemes and methods  
of

of their own, whereby they may arrive at happiness distinct from and independent of the precepts of religion; and therefore it cannot but be an useful vindication of the goodness of God to us, in the revelation of his holy will, to shew the vanity and absurdity of all these schemes; to shew that irreligious men have always made use of wrong means to attain their purposes; and that their misery and disappointment have always been occasioned by deviating from those laws and rules of life by which God has ordained that happiness shall be attained.

In discoursing therefore upon the words of my text, I shall endeavour, first, to shew the vanity and imperfection of all philosophy and wisdom barely human, and its utter insufficiency to our happiness. Secondly, I shall endeavour to shew the



the perfection and superior excellence of that wisdom which is from above, the philosophy which is after *Christ*.

First, then, the wisdom of one sort of these vain philosophers is founded upon a proud desire of pre-eminence and superiority over others, and consists in examining the powers and dependencies of nature, and searching out the causes and effects of the things that are without them with great accuracy and exactness; and when they have, with infinite toil, run to the end of their tether, they form to themselves such a state and constitution of the world without them as, they think, will account for all the appearances and effects that perplex and amaze the rest of mankind: this is the professed design of *Epicurus* and his followers.

'Tis plain there can be no happiness in this wisdom, because (not  
to

to mention the absurdity of the principles they often build upon) the best human understandings are limited and imperfect, and 'tis impossible to form such a scheme of things as will not fail in a thousand instances, and every such failure is a new cause of disquiet.

But this is not the worst, for, whenever any thing happens contrary to the systems of these philosophers, instead of reflecting upon the weakness and insufficiency of their own understandings, they immediately arraign the constitution of things, and the wisdom of him that disposed them, little considering how unable they are to fathom the depths of infinite knowledge and almighty power! and to account for their workings! and yet 'tis the least of their vanity to correct their Maker; for, rather than allow any thing wiser than themselves, they will often deny him; and, in the  
course

course of their inquiries into the powers of nature, they will frequently fix upon some near and immediate cause, rather than pursue the chain to the true origin of things: they will fix upon some power, which, upon a better examination, appears to be, in truth, no cause at all, but barely a poor, passive, secondary instrument in the hand of God! thereby justifying that excellent remark of that great *English* genius the lord Bacon, that *a little philosophy inclineth men's minds to atheism, but depth in it brings them about again to religion; for, while the mind of man (says he) looketh upon second causes scattered, it may sometimes rest in them; but, when it beholdeth the chain of them confederate and linked together, it must needs fly to Providence and Deity.*

But, suppose the wisdom of these men should reach to all it aimed at,  
and



and that their schemes answered all the appearances they were calculated to solve—yet, after all, what happiness could they derive from these researches? Is not all this knowledge vain to the great purposes of life, to virtue, and goodness, and happiness? Will it secure them against accidents and misfortunes? Will it support them under diseases and afflictions? Will it relieve them from the fear of death, or the horrors of guilt? Or will it satisfy the longings and cravings of the soul after immortality? Take his account, who was best skilled in it, of all the sons of men: *I gave my heart (says Solomon) to seek and to search out by wisdom, concerning all things that are done under heaven* — And what was the result of all this search, but that *in much wisdom there is much grief; and he that increaseth knowledge increaseth sorrow!*

But,

But, secondly, there was another sort of vain philosophers among the *Jews*, who, rejecting the plain obvious, natural sense of Scripture, had recourse to wild allegorical interpretations, founded, as they pretended, upon traditions in the keeping of their doctors; and this is that philosophy which the Apostle called a vain deceit, after the traditions of men.

These men pretended to explain the known law of God by another imaginary law, which they called the *oral*; and, in so doing, indulged their vain imaginations, in all the refinements of folly and extravagance that can be imagined; and, by this means, as our blessed Saviour observed of them, rendered *the law of God of no effect by their traditions*.

And, although these were, in truth, the most absurd and extravagant sect that ever set up for superior

perior wisdom, yet have even their  
greatest extravagances found their  
followers among the vaunted wise  
men of the present age; not, in-  
deed, in the same form of folly,  
but the true spirit of it, inasmuch  
that, if we give them credit, the  
plainest declarations of *Moses*, and  
miracles of *Jesus Christ*, are equally  
uninfluencing and unimportant: if  
the declarations of Scripture are dif-  
ficult, they are unmeaning; for  
nothing is intelligible, which they  
cannot understand.

Is there a surer mark of folly in  
this world, than to despise what we  
do not understand?

On the other hand, if the obvious  
literal sense of the Scripture is  
plain to the meanest capacity, they  
reject it, for that very reason; for  
their vanity requires refinement. As  
if the whole of religion consisted in  
pure knowledge, and the endow-  
ment



ment of that were their own sole gift.

The truth is this ; they have neither simplicity enough to honour plain truths, nor humility enough to submit to difficulties, upon the credit of infinite wisdom ; nor penetration enough to determine upon them from the force of deeper and more masterly disquisitions !

Now, how is it possible to deal with those men, who despise plain truths, and disclaim those that are difficult ? Or how is it possible to assign surer marks and characters of folly than these two, — to reject the plainest declarations of unerring wisdom, merely because they are plain ; and the darker declarations, because they are not clear.

To say the truth, some declarations of Scripture are difficult : for example, man's first offence, the fall, and the redemption ; and to say that these are dark and difficult,

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what

what is it but to say, that the meth-  
 ods of infinite wisdom are not  
 always to be clearly judged of, or  
 thoroughly comprehended, by such  
 short sighted, limited creatures as  
 we are? — How just is that fine ob-  
 servation in the Wisdom of Solomon,  
*What man is he that can know the*  
*counsel of God? Or who can think*  
*what the will of the Lord is?* For  
 the thoughts of mortal men are miser-  
 able! and their devices but uncer-  
 tain, for the corruptible body presseth  
 down the soul, and the earthly taber-  
 nacle weigheth down the mind that  
 miseth upon many things. And  
 hardly do we guess aright things that  
 are upon earth, and with labour do  
 we find the things that are before us;  
 but the things that are in Heaven,  
 who hath searched out? — And thy  
 counsel who hath known, except thou  
 give wisdom, and send thy Holy Spi-  
 rit from above! — The

The next sort of vain philosophers are those who employ themselves in the pursuit of that wisdom, which the Scripture calls *worldly*; or, as it is in my text, *the philosophy that is after the rudiments of the world*. These men, observing upon the vanity and insatisfaction of long and laborious inquiries into nature, turn their search another way, and, concluding with good reason, that felicity cannot consist in empty speculations, listen to the sollicitation of their appetites, and place their happiness in the full gratification of them in all their pursuits and demands! and, finding that the good things of this world are necessary to such a gratification, they apply themselves with diligence to the acquisition of them: from hence are all the projects of ambition and avarice, and all the contrivances of policy and art, it being the business of worldly wisdom to instruct its



profelytes in the methods of fixing the tempers and inclinations of men, and searching out their interests and abilities, and diving into their deepest secrets, that by this means they may be enabled to delude and overreach their brethren, and apply their powers, passions, and inclinations, to their own purposes.

From hence it is that we meet with so many instances in history, and in the world too, at all times, (and more, perhaps, at this time than were ever heard of at any other) of men that make use of the most execrable means to accomplish their wicked views; that stick at no methods of calumny, and falsehood, and fraud; that raise outcries of impending danger and destruction to those interests, which they know to be dear to their fellow citizens, in order to impose upon their hopes and fears, that so they may bend them to their own designs!

designs! in a word, that sacrifice their faith, their friends, their country, all that is good and sacred, to their private aims!

Now, that there is no happiness to these men is very evident; for, First, they are under continual alarms lest men should see through their pretences, and vindicate the abuses put upon them; and, indeed, with good reason, because I am persuaded there never was one worldling so crafty, and so plausibly hypocritical, as not to be detected and despised by the meanest of mankind that had any reasonable opportunities of observing upon his conduct.

What weakness is it to imagine, that a veil of fraud on the face, or artifice on the lips, can long conceal the workings of the heart, which never fail to discover themselves by a thousand ways, imperceptible only to the authors of the artifice, but glaring to every other eye! so that

these subtle designers are in truth as silly as those fillicot of bytues, who imagine they are invible, if they can hide their heads, tho' they shamefully expose their most deformed and most defenceless parts.

But, supposing they should, for a time, escape undetected, yet how often does it come to pass, that, when their fine projects are at the point of perfection, some small unforeseen accident intervenes, that marrs and defeats all their schemes at once, and sets them as far back as they were at first! Or, though neither of these should happen, though they should perfect their deceits, and accomplish their designs, yet, after they have reached the height of all their aims, they must preserve their iniquitous acquisitions by the same painful and unworthy methods by which they first acquired them: their conscience all the while arraigning their guilt, and stinging their



their souls, the thoughts of death  
terrifying them, and the terrors of  
divine vengeance killing all quiet  
within them, living a perpetual  
proof of that certain truth and just  
judgment of the Almighty, *There  
is no peace, saith my God, to the  
wicked.*

The end of this worldly wisdom,  
I told you, was the gratification of  
our ambition and sensual appetites;  
for this cause men labour after wealth  
and power, because these are the  
means by which they may best ac-  
quire those things wherewith to gra-  
tify their vanities and their appetites  
in the enjoyment of those objects  
that are best suited to them.

Now, as to the enjoyment of  
wealth and worldly affluence, 'tis  
plain, that they, who place their  
happiness there, place it out of  
their power; for, though fortune  
should be so favourable to them, that  
they might not have been at any  
trouble

trouble in acquiring the good things of life, yet will this free them from the trouble and anxiety of preserving them, or the sorrow of finding all that labour and anxiety not sufficient? *For riches often make to themselves wings, and escape the strongest hold, and most watchful care of their keepers: and, though this should not happen, yet do we not find (besides a thousand vexations inseparable from them) that, in their greatest glory and affluence, they are not able to relieve their owners under the pangs of sickness or the terrors of death; nay, not so much as from the uneasiness of a perverse humour!—Moreover, the dazzle of their pomp and splendor is found to vanish upon the possession, and is altogether useless to the principal demands of nature.*

*With ambition it fares after the same manner, witness the greatest examples*

examples of it in history, *Alexander*, *Cæsar*, *Pyrrhus*,\* and many others.

With the passions of the worldlings and sensualists it fares yet worse. The boundless gratification of them does but make them more restless and uneasy; and, either by a monstrous and unnatural growth, instead of being satisfied, they increase with their objects, or else destroy themselves in the pursuit! Thus 'tis notorious, that the desire of wealth grows with the possession of it, and those wants, which it was designed

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\* Concerning the last of whom there is this very remarkable and beautiful passage in *Plutarch*:

When his friend *Cinæas* had led him, by a series of questions, to disclose the extent of his ambition through a succession of conquests over *Italy*, *Sicily*, *Afric*, *Macedon*, and *Greece*, he demanded, in the conclusion: Sir, when all these are in our power, what shall we do then? Said *Pyrrhus*, smiling, My dear friend, we'll live at our ease, and drink all day, and divert ourselves with pleasant discourse. And what hinders us now, Sir, says *Cinæas*, if we have a mind to be merry, and entertain one another? Since all things necessary for it are at hand without trouble, to which, through much blood, and great labour, and infinite hazards, we design to arrive.

Thus it is with the ambitious.



designed to supply, are increased by the accession of other imaginary wants, that often deny their owners the use of what they actually possess.

And, on the other hand, does not the lawless gratification of sensual appetites push men on to excesses that are attended with infinite ill consequences both to themselves and others; that either cut life short in its progress, or load it with misery; that draw after them a thousand diseases, and dangers, and disquiets; that make men loath the objects of their desire; and, what is worse, though they still desire them, yet render them incapable of enjoying them!—And thus 'tis plain, that happiness is not to be attained, either upon the principles of worldly wisdom, or the *Epicurean* schemes of sensuality and indulgence—nor from both these united.

designed to supply, are increased by  
~~the necessity of other things~~  
~~which they have their own~~  
~~of what they actually pos-~~

# SERMON XV.

*Coloss. chap. ii. ver. 8.*

*Beware lest any one spoil you through  
 philosophy and vain deceit, after  
 the traditions of men, after the  
 rudiments of the world, and not  
 after Christ.*

**I**N a former discourse upon these  
 words, I proposed to discuss  
 two points:

*First,* To shew you the vanity  
 and imperfection of all philosophy  
 and wisdom, barely human, and  
 its utter insufficiency to our happi-  
 ness.

*And, Secondly,* To shew the per-  
 fection and superior excellence of

that wisdom which is from above,  
the philosophy which is after *Christ*.

Under the *First* head, I shewed  
you, First, the vanity of that phi-  
losophy which consisteth in search-  
ing out the powers and dependen-  
cies of nature, by observing, First,  
that it often failed; and was attend-  
ed with vexation and disappoint-  
ment; and, Secondly, that it was  
utterly useless to virtue, piety, and  
immortality, the great aims and  
only rational blessings and felicities  
of the human life.

The next sort of vain philosophy  
I mentioned was that which taught  
men to depart from the plain let-  
ter of the law of God, like the  
Rabbins among the *Jews*, but with  
this difference, that, whereas the  
Rabbins gave themselves wholly up  
to the direction of their wild tradi-  
tions, these men profess only to  
follow the dictates of reason.

But



But the misfortune is, that reason, unassisted by revelation, never was a good guide; never yet directed any one man right since the foundation of the world;—never was able either to establish true virtue in the world, or ascertain the immortality of the soul, or make atonement for guilt;—and that philosophy, which can effect none of these, must, at first sight, be demonstrably erroneous and imperfect.

The next sort of vain philosophy I mentioned to you was that which is known by the name of worldly wisdom, or, as it is in my text, the philosophy which is after the rudiments of the world.

The views of this wisdom, I told you, terminated in the acquisition of power and wealth, whereby to gratify the appetites and passions in all their pursuits and demands.

Now, that there was no happiness in this wisdom, I shewed you,  
First,

First, because the means, made use of for these acquisitions, being evil, always created danger, doubt, distrust, and disquiet of conscience; and, Secondly, because a boundless gratification of appetites makes them but more vexatious and uneasy, and leads to diseases, excesses, and inconveniencies of every kind.

Another sort of vain philosophers there were, who, being convinced of the vanity and insufficiency of the things without us to constitute our happiness, and the toil and slavery of indulging the passions in all their demands, reflecting, at the same time, upon the dignity and excellence of the rational principle within them, easily concluded the soul that noble superior part, that ought to preside and govern in their composition.

In their sensual appetites they found themselves upon a level with brutes, in their rational capacity vastly  
above

above them; and from hence they inferred, that their reason was the man, and that the great misfortune of mankind, hitherto, had been occasioned by their blind pursuits of sensual objects, and their gratifications of brutal and low impulses; and therefore, they concluded, the way to perfection and happiness was to shake off this clog that oppressed their nature, and divest themselves of every thing that put them upon a level with brutes. — But they found the work of much more difficulty than they imagined; the union was too close and too strong for all their resolutions; in spite of all the violences they offered to nature, she recoiled upon them with new force; they got above the rest of the world in their reasonings and speculations, but they seldom failed to come down to them again, to greater disadvantage, in their practice; the pains and cravings of their inferior nature



nature allowed them but little complacency in their imaginary separation and superiority; 'twas a state of incessant war betwixt the flesh and the spirit, and certainly there could be but little happiness where there was no peace.

In the last place, others, concluding this division and seclusion of the animal part from the man to be unnatural and impracticable, went a middle way to work; they found a good degree of pleasure in the gratification of their appetites; but they observed, at the same time, that they were blind, unruly principles, and needed the guidance of reason; therefore they concluded happiness to consist in the gratification of their appetites, under the conduct of reason; from hence they set themselves to observe and find out such rules as were necessary for a just regulation of their appetites, in order to attain to perfection and happiness.

These

These rules they are generally supposed to have deduced from right reason, and just observations upon the relation we bear to other beings and the world without us; and, forasmuch as these rules are intirely agreeable to the perfection of our nature, and greatly tend to preserve it in that perfection, therefore they are very properly called *laws of nature*: the practice of these rules was justly esteemed virtue, and the neglect and transgression of them vice; and, in the strict observance of these, the wisest of the heathen world placed the happiness and perfection of mankind. And, it must be owned, these came nearest to the truth, and did as much, towards attaining the great end of their being, as was in the power of mortals: they went as far as human reason, unassisted, could carry them: but still the great grievances of life continued; they had no sufficient sanction to bind

A a

mankind

mankind to the observance of them; and, when men were under no other engagements to virtue, but the satisfaction that resulted from a just and rational conduct, the consequence was, that they always erred and transgressed whenever they could propose greater advantages from neglecting or violating those laws, than from observing of them.

They had still little or no consolation under the cross accidents and afflictions of life; they had no relief from the fear of death and terrors of guilt, nor any solid consolation in the hopes of immortality.

And this is the very best character and condition of the very wisest and best of men, who at this day call themselves *Deists*, and imagine themselves distinguished from other men by superior light of understanding and freedom of thought! though 'tis but too notorious, that they have never yet discovered one  
single



single truth that was any way either honourable or advantageous to human nature, nor ever yet advanced any one proposition against revelation, that has not, upon a thorough examination, carried with it the clearest indications of gross ignorance, of great corruption, or, at best, of mean and groveling conceptions!

And thus we see the misery, the vanity, and imperfection of all worldly philosophy; and that vexation and disappointment have ever been the inseparable attendants of all wisdom barely human.

I come now, in the next place, to shew you the perfection and superior excellence of that wisdom which is from above, the philosophy of which is after *Christ*.

Man did as much as in him lay to attain to the perfection and true end of his being; but the knowledge of that was a discovery re-

served for a greater than he; nothing less than God could reveal it; nothing but God, that gave him being, could guide him to happiness! and therefore he sent down his Son from heaven, to bring *life and immortality to light by the Gospel!* and to reveal to us the whole will of God! upon the knowledge and observance of which depended our perfection and felicity.

The sum, then, of that revelation is this:

He has delivered to us a few, plain, and easy rules of duty, obvious to every man's capacity (supplying all that was defective, and correcting all that was erroneous, in human reasoning concerning them) and one general rule, yet easier than they, to explain all the rest by, namely, that we should *do unto all men as we would they should do unto us.* And, what the most perfect philosophy of the Heathen could  
never

never effect, he has bound these rules upon our consciences by everlasting and unspeakable happiness to those that observe them, and eternal and intolerable punishment to those that transgress them! And, (what no wisdom, barely human, could, from its own force, fully comprehend) he has shewed us the present corruption and degeneracy of our nature, and the cause of it; —and laid down such plain, yet perfect, precepts for our observance as have a clear tendency to refine and improve it; he offered up himself a sacrifice to the divine justice for our sins, and now sits, at the right hand of God, to make continual intercession for us.

And forasmuch as, by reason of our present imperfection, we are not able of ourselves steadily to pursue those things that are well-pleasing in the sight of God, therefore hath our blessed Saviour obtained, that



the Holy Spirit of God should *help our infirmities, working in us both to will and to do of his good pleasure*, by the secret assistance of his grace influencing and inspiring our souls in the prosecution of those things wherein consist our perfection and happiness.

He has taught us to believe and adore this blessed Trinity; to obey, and bless, and glorify God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost! to observe all the divine laws, which are, for the most part, no other than those very deductions of reason, those moral and religious duties, improved, refined, and enlarged, which nature and happiness recommended to the wisest of mankind before this revelation (however then unattended to!) These are the rules of truth, justice, temperance, piety, and chastity, &c. These our Saviour *Christ* has taught us (as I before observed) in the utmost perfection,

fection, and guarded them with the highest functions!

And whereas, before his coming, these could only be of use to a few men, and (in many instances) could only oblige those who had better abilities and greater strength of reason to discern their rectitude, they are now, by the preaching of the Gospel, become plain and obvious to the meanest capacity, and their obligation and use extended to all mankind.

Whereas, then, 'tis by the observance of these rules and precepts alone that God wills us to obtain all the happiness he intended for us, all the perfection of which our nature is capable, either in this world or the next; and whereas, as I before observed to you, disquiet and disappointment is the natural and unavoidable consequence of transgressing and swerving from these rules; 'tis evident, that the misery

and misfortune of such as deviate from these precepts is no more an imputation upon the goodness of God, than it would be an imputation upon the skill of a physician, that his patient's distemper was inflamed by pursuing methods directly contrary to his prescriptions! — And herein is manifested the exceeding goodness of God to us, that those rules, upon the observance of which the wisest men have ever concluded our greatest happiness in this world to depend, are now made the means and conditions of our salvation; so that obeying the commands of God does not only raise us to the greatest perfection we are capable of in this world, but is rewarded with endless and inconceivable beatitude in the next:

But that, which is a considerable point of the *Christian* philosophy, is yet behind:

Our



Our blessed Saviour hath taught us, that perfect happiness is not to be attained in this world; so that the *summum bonum* of antiquity is a mere delusion, that existed only in their own imagination!

As for this world, *Christ* teaches us, that it is only a state of probation; and that sometimes those, that are most pleasing to God, are, with regard to their outward condition, most wretched in it; that *we are pilgrims and sojourners here below*, travellers to another and better country; and therefore we may well bear with all the little crosses and troubles of our journey, in assurance of complete satisfaction at the end of it.

Wherefore are we afflicted? The *Christian* religion teaches us, that we are in the hands of a good God, who cannot but do every thing for the best; who corrects us as an indulgent father does his children, for  
their

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their amendment, giving us full assurance, that, if we bear, as becomes us, *these light afflictions, which are but for a moment, they will work for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.*

Are we rich? The good things of this life are but small earnestts of greater and better things in store for us; therefore we will not set our hearts upon them; they do not deserve a moment's anxiety; our business is only to enjoy them with innocence as far as we have occasion, and dispose the overplus as he directs, *to do good and to distribute, for with such sacrifices God is well pleased.*

Are we poor? There is no value in the perishing things of this world, compared with *that glory which shall be revealed.*

Have we lost our dearest and best friends? Were they ill men, 'tis to be hoped God hath given them  
grace

grace to repent; at least we are to thank him, that he hath cut off the progress of their iniquity, and removed them from occasions of greater condemnation! Were they good men, they are with God; why then should we repine at their happiness? And if we ourselves are good *Christians*, we do but part with them for a moment to enjoy them to all eternity, or else to exchange them for the society of angels and archangels.

Thus it is with a good *Christian*; in all conditions and circumstances of life he looks up to God, and finds infinite consolation in the prospect; he enjoys a sort of beatific vision in this life, and is delighted with the assurance of perfecting that enjoyment in the next.

And this, I hope, is sufficient to illustrate the perfection and superior excellence of that wisdom which is from above. — But, if there yet remains



mains any doubt upon this head,—compare the condition of the *Christian* and the Infidel philosopher; ask the *Christian*, what atonement for guilt, what security of life, what comfort in death, what hopes after it; what stay in adversity, what consolation in affliction, what assurance in prosperity, what felicity in lawless gratification of appetite, what reward of a painful pursuit of virtue?—The *Christian's* answers are obvious:—In every condition of life he is under the protection of the mightiest, the wisest, and the best of beings! whose power will always protect, and whose promises can never fail him! and therefore he is always easy and assured—he has the noblest consolation and surest support in this world, the sure promises of God, the consummate merits and unfailing mediation of *Jesus Christ*, and the glorious prospect of immortality

talities and endless felicity in the next.

Put the same questions to the Infidel, and his answers must be as follow: no atonement for guilt — no security of life! terrified at the approach of death; afflicted in it; no secure and rational hope after it; no consolation in adversity, but that which is the dreadfullest of all others, the necessity of bearing it; toiled, and, it may be, destroyed in the boundless gratification of appetite, and, after the painful pursuit of virtue, unrewarded!

Thus it was with the Heathen of old, but with the present Infidel and the wicked *Christian* it is infinitely worse! they had better opportunities, greater advantages of information, clear, demonstrative, unanswerable proofs of the truth of revelation; more assistance from the Holy Spirit of God; greater encouragements to virtue; greater discouragements

discouragements from vice; and yet, after all this, to go on in iniquity; to despise so much goodness, such immense mercy! to sin against the light of the Gospel, and the conviction of their own souls, is such a height and perfection of guilt, as nothing can aggravate or alleviate.

And yet, after all, what fruit have they of those things for which they sacrifice their souls? Compare the loaded, stupid, dispirited, disquieted condition of the sot and sensualist to the free, chearful state of the chaste and temperate; compare the revels and excesses of the libertine to the sincere enjoyments of the virtuous; compare the joys of a good conscience with the terrors of a bad one; compare the dark doubts and endless disquiets of the *Deist* to the clear conviction and sure confidence of the good *Christian*; compare the momentary, the monstrous satisfaction,



satisfaction, that flows from the corruption of innocence, and the violation of all the noble maxims of justice and honesty, to that solid joy that springs up in the heart from one act of goodness; from easing the load of life; from strengthening and protecting virtue, and rescuing distressed innocence! Compare the painful artifices and servile fawnings of the ambitious with the open and honest conduct of a good man; the endless anxieties of the covetous with the glad transports of the charitable! Compare the littleness, the meanness, the baseness of him that pursues the impulse of his appetites; that sacrifices religion and virtue to their gratification; that levels himself *with the beasts that perish*; compare these with his dignity, that raises and ennobles his nature, and aspires after the resemblance of Almighty God; that is just, and holy, and kind, and compassionate;

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compassionate ; that studies to *be perfect as his Father which is in heaven is perfect* ; and then judge as evidence and truth direct.

SER-

## S E R M O N XVI.

Preached on *Whit-Sunday*, with  
several Considerations in relation  
to that festival.

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*Acts*, chap. ii. ver. 1, 2, 3.

*And, when the day of Pentecost was  
fully come, they were all, with one  
accord, in one place. — And sud-  
denly there came a sound from  
heaven as of a rushing mighty  
wind, and it filled all the house  
where they were sitting. — And  
there appeared unto them cloven  
tongues like as of fire, and it sat  
upon each of them ; and they were  
all filled with the Holy Ghost, and*  
B b *began*



*began to speak with other tongues,  
as the Spirit gave them utter-  
ance.*

**T**HIS day's festival hath all along been accounted worthy of most holy and solemn observance by the *Christian* Church, in commemoration of that miraculous descent of the Holy Ghost upon our blessed Saviour's disciples mentioned in my text.

Among the primitive *Christians* the feasts of *Easter* and *Whitsuntide* were in such high veneration, that the whole space between them was solemnly observed, all fasts were suspended, and public worship performed in the same manner as on the Lord's-day, the people all standing, in a posture of praise, and joy, and thanksgiving.

At these seasons only, public baptism was administered ; at *Easter*, in memory of our blessed Saviour's death

death and resurrection, which were figured by dipping such persons as came to be baptised into water; and raising them up again, *to signify a death unto sin, and a new birth unto righteousness.*—At *Whitsuntide* also, the same sacrament was administered, as a memorial that the disciples of *Christ* were baptised, as at that time, with the Holy Ghost and with fire.

One remarkable circumstance of this festival was, that, as well on the day of *Pentecost*, as the whole week following, the new-baptised were wont to come to church in white garments, with lights before them, in token that they had now laid aside *the works of darkness, and were become the children of light*; — and intended, from thenceforth, to lead new and innocent lives.—Upon this account this day is supposed to be called *Whitfunday*, that is, *White Sunday*, from the white robes then worn by the new converts; and,

without question, the torches, then borne before them, were emblems of that fire from heaven, which descended at this time upon the disciples.

Having premised this short account of this solemn festival, the business of this discourse shall be to make some observations upon the miraculous descent of the Holy Ghost as at this time, and to make those observations as useful to you as I can.

And, first, that God's dispensation to the *Jews*, in the law by *Moses*, was to be a type of the *Christian* church, and the dispensation of the Gospel by *Jesus Christ*, I think, is no where more fully evidenced than in the miracle of this day: indeed, the great correspondence between them is so apparent in the present case, that it cannot be denied: for, as our blessed Saviour, who was the true *Paschal* lamb,



*lamb*, was offered up upon the cross at the same time that the pass-over was kept by the *Jews*, so, upon the same day that the law was promulged by God from *Mount Sinai*, and the first covenant established, I say, upon that very day, the Gospel, which is the second covenant, was published from *Mount Sion* in as wonderful, altho' not so terrible, a manner.

It will not be amiss to illustrate this circumstance a little farther.

In the 23d chapter of *Leviticus* and the 15th and 16th verses, we read this ordinance concerning the *Pentecost*: Ye shall count unto you from the morrow after the Sabbath, from the day that ye brought the sheaf of the wave-offering; seven Sabbaths shall be complete, even unto the morrow after the seventh Sabbath shall ye number fifty days, and ye shall offer a new meat-offering unto the Lord.

Hence, from the seven weeks interval betwixt the *Passover* and the *Pentecost*, the latter was called the *feast of weeks*, and is the second of those three great solemnities, in which all the males of *Israel* were strictly enjoined to appear before the Lord in the place that he should chuse.—As therefore on the former of these feast-days, that of first-fruits and unleavened bread, (when the *Israelites* were commanded to offer the first-fruits of their spring or barley harvest) *Christ, the first-fruits of them that slept, arose from the dead*; so on the second feast, (which was the time the *Jews* were obliged to offer the first-fruits of their second or wheat harvest) the Holy Ghost descended upon the disciples; and then did Almighty God, in a most remarkable manner, distinguish and crown the characters of his son's disciples, by pouring upon them the abundance of  
of

of his Spirit, and enabling them to bring him, the same day, an offering of three thousand souls, a noble first fruits of converts to the *Christian* religion, won by their preaching ! Nor shall we find any kind of force in this manner of interpretation, if we consider that the seasons of offering the first-fruits under the law were the openings of their barley and wheat harvest ; and that the season of publishing the Gospel is called by our blessed Saviour the *Harvest*, and the preachers of it *Reapers*.

Can any thing then be more remarkable, or more evident, than the divine providence so ordering the events of things, that the seasons of dispensing the evangelical blessings should so exactly fall in with those, wherein the legal blessings, resembling or rather representing them, were commemorated ? — At the *Passover* the Jews slew the



*Paschal lamb*; then followed the feast of unleavened bread in commemoration of their deliverance from the *Egyptian* bondage, from which they fled in such a hurry, that they had not time to leaven their bread. At the *Passover* the lamb of God, which taketh away the sins of the world, was slain; offered up himself upon the cross. At the *Passover* he rose again from the dead; and from this *era* we date our deliverance from sin and slavery, a more than *Egyptian* bondage!

Fifty days after the wave-offering, the *Jews* commemorate their receiving the law from God on *Mount Sinai*, because it came to pass exactly fifty days after their deliverance from the *Egyptian* bondage. Fifty days after the resurrection of *Christ*, we commemorate the descent of the Holy Ghost upon his disciples, because, at that exact distance of time after

after our deliverance from the bondage of sin and *Satan*, the Holy Ghost came down to promulge the new and evangelical law, by the miraculous preaching of the Apostles.

The next thing worthy our observation is the place where this miracle was performed, and this, we are assured, was at *Jerusalem*; for we find, from the 1st chapter of the *Acts* and the 4th verse, that the Apostles returned to *Jerusalem* immediately after our blessed Saviour's ascension into heaven, and he had commanded them (24th chapter of *St. Luke* and 49th verse) to continue at *Jerusalem* until they should be endued with power from on high; and, behold, (saith he) I send the promise of my Father upon you; but tarry ye in the city of *Jerusalem* until ye be endued with power from on high. And again, we are assured, *Acts*, chap. ii. ver. 4, that *Christ* commanded them, that they should

not

not depart from *Jerusalem*, but wait for the promise of the Father, which, saith he, ye have heard of me. It was in *Jerusalem* they were obliged, by the law, to solemnize the feast of the *Pentecost*; and, for that reason, our blessed Saviour knew that there would be a vast confluence of *Jews*, from all quarters, assembled there at that time, who, by that means, would have a happy opportunity of seeing, and believing, and attesting this miraculous descent of the Holy Ghost upon his disciples.

But it is yet farther observable, that, as our blessed Saviour had appointed his disciples to wait at *Jerusalem* until they were impowered from above to promulge and propagate the Gospel, so the Prophets had long since foretold, that the publication of the Gospel should be from that place; thus *Micah* and *Isaiab* foretel, in the very same words,  
*that*



*that the law should go forth out of Sion, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem; and our blessed Saviour assureth his Apostles, that the Scriptures required it should be so, as you may read at the 24th chapter of St. Luke, ver. 46, 47. Thus it is written (saith he) and thus it behoved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day;—and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached, in his name, among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.—And, as to this miraculous effusion of the Holy Spirit, St. Peter assureth us in this chapter, whereof my text is a part, that it is the same which was spoken of by the prophet Joel, (chap. ii. ver. 28.) And it shall come to pass, in the last days, saith the Lord, that I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh.—Now by the last days, in the Scriptures, are always understood the days of the Messiah; and the sense*  
of

of the text is evidently this, that, whereas, in ancient times, and under the law, the Holy Ghost dispensed his sacred influences in small portions and to a peculiar people, the Spirit of God should now flow in fuller measures under the dispensation of the Gospel, and that *upon all flesh*, that is, upon men of all nations and kindreds, *Gentiles* as well as *Jews*.

Again:

After the place where this miracle was wrought, it will be proper to observe some other circumstances of a very extraordinary nature that attended it. — *And suddenly* (saith the text) *there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting.*

There is a noble elevation in these expressions, fitted to convey greater and more exalted ideas of the Almighty's descension from heaven,  
ven,

ven, than any words, less than those he himself inspireth, can come up to.—The suddenness of the sound, the strength and majesty of it so well set forth in the expressions of a *rustling mighty wind*, the point of direction it came from, *viz.* from heaven, all these were circumstances of amazing magnificence, happily fitted to excite a deep attention and most profound reverence in the souls of all that heard it, and, of consequence, to prepare them for the awful approaches of an Almighty God.—And, for the truth of this, I appeal to every observing man that hears me, whether he hath ever found any thing so powerful, at once to fix and to awe his attention, as the sound of a solemn wind? And whether it hath not always had this effect upon him, although neither loud, nor strong, nor sudden, nor new, and though directed only from the adjacent houses, or hills,

or



or trees? What then must be the power of a wind, quite out of the course of nature, rushing down upon us, from the heights of heaven! new and unheard, sudden and mighty! how aptly and how nobly doth this event answer those great prophetic ideas of the *Psalmist*, *ascribe the power to God over Israel*; and, indeed, to whom else could that miraculous converse power and influence over *Israel* be ascribed, but to that great being whose *worship and strength are in the clouds!* *who maketh his angels spirits, and his ministers a flaming fire!* *Magnify him that rideth upon the heavens!* *He rode upon the Cherubims, and did fly; he came flying upon the wings of the wind.* — Then also was demonstrably and gloriously fulfilled what was foretold by the royal prophet concerning the *Messiah*: *Thou art gone up on high, thou hast led captivity captive, and received gifts*

*gifts for men; yea, even for thine enemies, that the Lord God might dwell among them! Sing unto God, ye kingdoms of the earth; O sing praises unto the Lord, to him that rideth upon the heavens which were of old; lo, he doth send out his voice, yea, and that a mighty voice.*

And this naturally leads us to consider with how much wisdom this miracle was filled to produce those great ends intended by it.

There were now assembled at *Jerusalem* *Jews* (to say nothing of proselytes) from all quarters of the habitable world, met to solemnize the great festival of the *Pentecost*: This may be easily conceived, if we consider, that, besides the remarkable increase of that people, and their establishment among other nations, in the natural consequence of a long commerce and intercourse with them, they had long before this time been carried away captive into

into different regions of the world, and so dispersed over the face of the earth; by this means an event, of so extraordinary a nature as this, had not only the advantages of being universally known, and speedily spread abroad and conveyed to the remotest regions, but likewise, what is as much the interest of the *Christian* religion, (and that in all other respects as well as this) it had the advantage to be nicely scanned and strictly examined by its most professed and bigotted enemies! for, by thus providentially timing this miracle, it came to pass, that those very persons, who, at the last great feast of the *Passover*, had been eyewitnesses of our blessed Saviour's passion, and, as they accounted it, shameful sufferings upon the cross, had now a fair opportunity of being fully convinced of his glory and truth by those powers of the Spirit conferred (as he had promised) and those



those miracles wrought in his name, which demonstrated him a glorified as well as crucified Saviour; and was, for that reason, an happy overbalance to the scandal of his cross.

And what can possibly be conceived to make more for the truth of any miracle, than this, that it freely and publicly offered itself to the examination of multitudes of people, in their present persuasion, violently bent against the doctrines it was intended to establish?

If we add to this, that the persons they now heard speak in all the various languages of the earth, were men known, to many of their hearers, to be persons of no education and very mean abilities; *Galileans*, natives of a country remarkable for stupidity and ignorance, the *Bæotia* of the *Jews*; and these too bred up to mean trades, and so destitute both of capacity and opportunity of knowledge! All this

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considered,

considered, their hearers certainly had abundant reason to conclude, that nothing less than omnipotence could make them do that in an instant, which would require the best abilities to attain in a series of many years, and much study! So amazing are the attainments where God condescendeth to instruct; and so evident is it that he doth instruct, when those attainments so infinitely transcend all the powers of art and nature.—But if we consider, that the end proposed by this miracle was no less than the conversion of a world, we shall the better conceive how worthy it was of God! for what could better become the wisdom, the goodness, and the providence of that great being who created the world, than to convert it when corrupted, to interpose in its amendment and preservation; to guide, to assist, and to inform, to

superintend,

superintend, and to restore the work of his own hands?

And here it is well worth observing how much Almighty God preferreth the purity of the heart before the abilities of the mind; he chose not the learned and the wise to publish his name, *and declare his wonders to the children of men*; but, on the contrary, he impowered the foolish, in one moment, to confound the wise, and the weak to confound the mighty, that no flesh might glory in his presence! to teach us also, that humility and innocence are far better recommendations to his favour than arts and sciences! and to demonstrate beyond all contradiction, to demonstrate to the confusion of the most obstinate infidelity, that those mighty operations were not the effects of ingenuity or industry, but the miraculous productions of a power from above! — *O Lord, how wonderful*



*are thy works, in wisdom hast thou made them all! Out of the mouths of babes and sucklings hast thou ordained strength, that thou mightest still the enemy and the avenger!*

The next thing I shall observe, in relation to this miracle, is the resemblance of fire, which the cloven tongues descending upon the apostles carried with them.—*And there appeared unto them cloven tongues, like as of fire:* I am sensible, that to reason from and to apply sensible appearances to spiritual purposes may, to many men, appear forced and irrational; yet, if we rightly consider the nature of man, we shall find, that it is oftentimes not only reasonable and warrantable, but even necessary so to do; forasmuch as spiritual things are, in some instances, scarce otherwise conceivable to us, but by analogical sensible representations, such as carry some, that is, such figurative relation and resemblance to things

things spiritual as enables us the better to conceive and comprehend them; and, for that reason, God hath been pleased, upon all extraordinary manifestations of himself, to make use of sensible appearances, the better to convey into the minds of his servants such ideas as those appearances were chosen, and naturally adapted, to produce or awaken in them: such were the circumstances of the Holy Ghost's appearance at this time; each very significant of those inward operations which the Apostles then, and others in proportion afterwards, were to expect, upon receiving that blessed Spirit into their hearts! None will deny, that the appearance of cloven tongues had an evident analogy to the effects which immediately followed; namely, the ability conveyed to those they sat upon to accommodate themselves to hearers of all nations, in all the variety of lan-

guage that was necessary to make what they had to say intelligible to them: and the like may, with equal justice, be concluded of fire, than which nothing could be a better emblem of the light these disciples received, by the accession of the Holy Spirit, of that clear, unerring knowledge they attained of all things they were concerned perfectly to understand! What could be more significant of that irresistible force whereby they bore down all opposition, of those clear and convincing arguments by which they awakened, affected, and inspired the weak, the insensible, the ignorant? — Or what could be a more lively emblem of that zeal and fearless courage which had now diffused itself through all their faculties, and kindled a generous and vigorous heat in their souls! such as enabled them to despise all threats and terrors, banished all fear from their hearts, and



and made them dare openly to profess and preach *Christ Jesus*.

From henceforth we hear no more of their denying their Lord, or trembling at the charge of belonging to *Jesus of Nazareth*; but, on the contrary, glorying in the relation, and rejoicing when they were counted worthy to suffer the greatest torments for the name of their crucified Saviour! as if this divine flame had been to them in the place of a new vital principle, so gloriously did it raise and purify their affections, and expel all the cowardice and coldness of human nature; so suddenly, so wonderfully, did it exalt and refine their understandings, and render them, in the noblest sense of the words, burning and shining lights!

The last thing that I shall observe upon this miraculous descent of the Holy Ghost is, that, when the disciples were blessed with it,

*they were all, with one accord, in one place,* met there upon a holy and a solemn occasion, to invoke, to adore, and to glorify God. — From this consideration divines have very justly observed, that the duties of religion are the best expedient to invite the Spirit of God; that prayer is necessary, not only to obtain, but to prepare us for his divine influences; that the assemblies of the saints are the places he delighteth to frequent, and is most likely to be found in, according to the assurance he himself hath given us, *that, where two or three are gathered together in his name, there will he be in the midst of them;* — that this Spirit of love, and order, and unity, bestoweth his gifts most bountifully where the servants of *Christ* are assembled, not only in one place, but with one accord also.

The inference from hence is very obvious: — Let us also, my brethren,

thren, bless Almighty God, that we are, this day, met in one place, and, I hope, with one accord, to celebrate his holy name, and to pray for the influences of his Holy Spirit.

It is true we must not expect him either to appear or operate upon us in the same manner, or to produce the same amazing effects; the holy Apostles heard him in a *voice of thunder*, and in a *rushing mighty wind*; but we are to listen to him in a still, gentle voice, kindly admonishing, raising, and purifying our affections, and guiding us in the ways of salvation and truth.— We must not expect, that he will enable us to work miracles; it is sufficient if we are inspired to practise virtues. We are not to hope for new faculties from him, but we are to pray for new and better dispositions. Of this, my brethren, be assured, that, although he be not exhibited



exhibited to us under any sensible appearance, although the Spirit of God descend not visibly upon our heads, yet, we trust, he sinks silently into our hearts! although he shake not the house wherein we sit, yet he fills it; and is as much present with us as if we all saw him in a sensible shape, and *heard him upon the wings of the wind.*—O, my brethren, the Lord is amongst us, as in the holy place of *Sinai*! the Lord is amongst us, as in the holy place of *Sion.*—O come, let us worship, and fall down, and kneel before the Lord our Maker; enable us, O Lord our God, to demean ourselves worthy of thy divine, thy adorable presence! inspire us to invite thee, our heavenly guest, in all earnestness and humility, to dwell with us; to receive thee, with the lowest submission and most thankful acceptance, into our hearts and souls. O, my brethren, let us not exclude  
this

this Holy Spirit descending down from heaven upon us ; let us not exclude him by stupid neglect or rude resistance ; let us not grieve thee by a perverse and wicked demeanor, nor tempt thee, by impious presumptions, nor provoke thee by repeated transgressions.— Let us not quench thy heavenly light and heat by our foul lusts and passions, but purify ourselves, as God is pure, that he may bless us by turning every one of us from the evil of his ways, and delight to dwell with us, from henceforth, for evermore.— Which thou, of thine infinite mercy, O blessed Spirit of God, vouchsafe to grant, through the merits and mediation of *Jesus Christ. Amen.*

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 submission and most thankful accep-  
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A Dissertation, in which Objections to the account of the Evangelists and Apostles of *Jesus Christ* being inspired by the Holy Ghost with the gift of languages are calmly and seriously considered.

THE miraculous endowment of the *Christian* disciples with the gift of tongues, on the day of *Pentecost*, is recorded in chap. ii. of the *Acts*, and was so public, and so fully manifested to many thousands of men, at that very time either strongly prejudiced, or at open enmity against the doctrine  
the

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the miracle was wrought to establish, that it is not easy to conceive what objection could possibly be raised against it; but the truth is, (as calm reflection teaches) that objections are easily raised, and infidel objections for that reason endless.

The old serpent is the true hydra, whose hissing heads of enmity and opposition multiply, as they are cut off.

The evidence of this fact is incontestable, but its effects are disputed and denied: it is owned, that some kind of language was, at that time, apparently infused into disciples of *Christ*; but, whether by enthusiasm, or how else, the objectors do not take upon them to pronounce, or trouble themselves to determine; they content themselves with insisting, that it could not be from the Spirit of God, because the language, now subsisting, and said to be so inspired, is utterly  
rude,

rude, barbarous, and abounding with every fault that can possibly deform a language, and therefore altogether unworthy of God, and impossible to have proceeded from him.

And, what seems to me almost as extraordinary, the ablest adversary these antichristian champions have met with, in effect, admits the fact; taking upon him to turn the infidel arms against themselves, by urging, that this objection is so far from proving such language not divinely inspired, that it is one certain mark of this original. Thus acting in the character of a hero, who, conscious of his own superior fortitude, and the righteousness of his cause, fears not, like *David*, to divest himself of royal armour, and engage these *Goliaths* of infidelity that defy the armies of the living God, with a peculiar armature of his own apparently disproportioned.

But,



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But, as the conduct and example of a great hero, whom all admire and honour, would certainly but ill become a mere subaltern of the church militant, I shall content myself with taking up the armour this able leader hath thrown off, and endeavour, however weakly, to defend myself and the cause with it.

To begin, then, I hardly (however rashly) own, that I deem the Sacred Writings of the New Testament to be so far from abounding with every fault that can deform a language, that I am fully satisfied, and, I hope, clearly convinced, that it abounds with every beauty, grace, and excellence that can adorn, endear, and inspire the highest honour, esteem, and veneration for any language; I can scarce forbear from adding the popery of adoration!

Rash and adventurous as I may appear in advancing thus far, I humbly own, as an apology for thus adventuring,

adventuring, that neither my own fortitude, nor vanity of military abilities, could inspire the attempt, but would rather urge and prevail upon me totally to decline the contest, did I not confide that I fight under the banners of the greatest hero in this cause I ever heard of.

I speak this, in the simplicity of my own judgment and belief, far from intending the least degree of offence to the character of any man alive or dead, without sacrificing to any thing but sacred truth, and without the least vain purpose or prospect of swaying the judgment of others to my opinion against plain evidence.

This hero, in the cause of the *Christian* classics, will, I apprehend, be easily known & owned and honoured as such by all that have carefully read his defence of them, printed in *London* forty years ago: A defence, which demonstrates more

knowledge of the best *Greek* writers of antiquity, and a more complete character of true and masterly criticism than I have had the happiness to meet with in the small compass of my reading, or the much larger of my life, for the most part, passed among books.

Indeed, I take no honour to myself from this declaration.

It is well known that a man may be very conversant with the best ancient *Greek* writers, and tolerably well read in their works, and yet not be able to recount with readiness, and compare and apply with judgment and exactness, similar passages from them all, in a great variety of instances, with those objected to in the New Testament, and, by so doing, to support and vindicate the classic purity of the sacred *Greek* text in many instances, wherein it hath been charged with barbarism.

I had



I had the felicity to be early and intimately acquainted with some cotemporaries deemed learned, some of whom had carefully read the best *Greek* historians and poets, and retained a great part of them in their memories, and, to my certain knowledge; spent many anxious hours in translating *Aristotle's Rhetoric*, no mean attempt\*.

I mention this, not to publish their merit, but, quite otherwise, to prove myself a sincere friend to truth, by owning what, I believe, nobody will now contest, that they were all inferior to Mr. *Blackwall* in *Greek* literature, although not meanly skilled in it; and, to speak the truth frankly and honestly, I do not know, nor did I ever hear of, any man living, who hath given proof of equal knowledge and abilities,

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\* This work should now be in the hands of Mr. *Sheridan* the player; whose father was the transcriber and a learned assistant in the attempt.

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ities, in the defence of the Sacred Writings, upon that head, as Mr. Blackwall. Which makes me own, what I am almost afraid to own, some degree (if I dared, I should say a great degree) of amazement, that, when a very learned prelate conceded to his adversary, that the labours of those, who attempted to defend the purity of the Scripture Greek, were idly employed, he did not vouchsafe to make one little (some shew of) exception in favour of Mr. Blackwall, who has proved himself a more complete critic in that language, and upon that subject, than all the advocates on the opposite side, not excepting the learned *Erasmus* and the great Mr. *Locke*.

And not only so, but he hath incontestably proved, that there are more excellencies of true oratory to be found in that sacred code, than in any (I verily think I might say

all of the celebrated masters of that art in the heathen world.

For full satisfaction upon this head, 'tis but said, I and I am sure will be much more satisfactory and useful to the reader, instead of quoting and recounting lamely and imperfectly, to refer him to the author's own words and reasons at large.

But can it be denied that the *Greek* of the New Testament abounds with barbarisms, syriacisms, and hebraisms?

I answer by owning, that it does, indeed, abound with syriacisms and hebraisms; and so does the *English* translation of the Bible, and is, for that very reason, generally allowed the best translation extant. The *Hebrew* idiom very happily falls in with the *English*, and gives nerves and strength to the elegance derived to it from the *Greek*; as *Cato's* and *Ennius's* old language did to the



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newer *Latin*, greatly graced in *Horace's* time; and, by that means, enriched it, \* as that excellent critic expresseth it, and brought in new words and names of things.

Now the *Hebrew* brought not only new words, but likewise new and noble ideas, expressed by those words, into the *Greek* tongue; and, therefore, to own no beauty or mastery in the language of the New Testament, but what is derived from the *Greek*, is a pedantry bearing a great affinity to the vanity of the old *Græcians*, who called all the world *Barbarians* but themselves, not knowing (from gross ignorance) or not owning, from great pride, that they owed not only their civility, but the very rudiments of their language and learning, the politeness

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\* *Ego cur acquirere pauca, si possum, inuideor, cum lingua Catonis & Enni Sermonem patrium ditaverit, & nova rerum Nomina protulerit?* Hor. Art. Poet.

politeness of their manners, and wisdom of their laws, to the people of God; not to *Solon*, but to *Moses*; nor to *Cadmus* the *Græcian*, or to *Hermes* the *Egyptian*, but to *Joseph* the *Israelite*, and the *Patriarch*, under God, the fountain-head of all the *Egyptian* wisdom.

Surely, if we attentively contemplate and compare the true causes, effects, and advantages, of the most powerful oratory, we shall find, that they all (and more than they all) fully and clearly concurred in the characters of the *Christian* disciples on that great day.

They were themselves well convinced of the truths they delivered, and intimately touched with the importance of them to their hearers; and, being fervent in spirit, they were eager and urgent in inculcating them with all the earnestness of honesty, and all the warmth of divine impulse! a

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warmth, which was, at first, mistaken for heat of wine, but quickly cleared up into a full conviction of their being inspired! nothing else could convey such amazing, such unheard-of powers, such heavenly doctrine! such great ideas of the wondrous works of God! of such astonishing and adorable appointments and dispensations of his providence! and when all this was delivered (as the text plainly informs us, and clearly implies it was) in a raised voice, and with all the power and force of masterly elocution, joined to all the highest and strongest motives of hopes and fears, which alternately raised and pierced the hearts of the hearers, it seems sufficiently obvious to every serious and attentive reader, that the style of the Sacred Writings being most animated, and the subject-matter the most important and interesting of



-of all others, it is most naturally fitted to fix the attention, and sink deep into the heart! and, consequently, to persuade and influence, to animate all the powers, and produce all the astonishing effects of pure unadulterated oratory! nor will any little reputed defect or imperfection of style ever be able to obstruct this end.

And thus far the learned bishop's bold assertion is strictly justified, that a neglect and contempt of those littlenesses of ornament and grammatical exactness of style, which is often branded with barbarism and solecism, is rather a proof of grandeur and dignity in the author, who despiseth and disdaineth to use them: but surely those little defects imply not every fault that can possibly deform a language, as its enemies object, and its great defender seems to admit. Indeed, I might

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might say, he admits more than they object\*.

His position is this :

*That divine inspiration can only convey the terms and single words of one language corresponding to those of another ; for an impression of phraseology, or idiom, requires, or rather implies, a previous one of the tempers, fashions, and opinions of the people, to whom the language is native, upon the minds of them to whom it is imparted.*

I well know, that a learned, and not a very cold, controversy hath lately been carried on upon this subject with great decency and politeness, and clearness of stile and argument,

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\* The learned author of the Doctrine of Grace, speaking of St. Paul, says, he was not *one of the more sordid and idiotic of the number*, that is, of the Apostles.

Now the word *idiotic* will, I know, admit an attempt of a poor excuse, as it may be interpreted *vulgar* or *illiterate* ; but, when *sordid* is added to it, a word incapable of an inoffensive sense, it sinks the language into such *Billingsgate* abuse, as nothing can aggravate or alleviate ! and such as no glory of great learning, or great abilities, can ever excuse !

ment, on one side; and, I am sorry to say, not without some insinuations of national as well as personal contempt on the other, apparently without any just ground for either.

I shall not presume to intermeddle in the contest farther than humbly to offer my reasons for joining on that side where I see, or persuade myself I see, the truth.

Indeed, it must be owned, that, although the learned prelate's assertion was at first express and positive, that a divine inspiration can only convey the terms and single words, yet he thought proper, after some time, to qualify this hardy assertion in favour of divine power; adding, that both a knowledge of the *Greek* terms, and a grammatical congruity in the use of them, was miraculously infused.

Now the knowledge of grammatical congruity, in the use of words, seems to me to imply a knowledge



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ledge of grammar; and a knowledge of grammar, inspired into an illiterate man, seems to me a much greater work than the knowledge of idiom, and naturally requires a much greater previous *apparatus*: so that this would be a saving of less trouble to providence, after a greater was expended.

But, suppose the idiom and phraseology of a language naturally produced, as the learned prelate asserts, I always apprehended, that the sure characteristic of a miracle was producing the most extraordinary effects without the intervention of natural causes! and I am sure incomparably more natural causes intervene in the production of wine from water (in the course of nature) than in the skill of idiom and phraseology of language, after the knowledge of grammatical congruity added to the knowledge of words: and yet the non-intervention

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of

of such necessary, natural causes, no way impeded the production of the best wine in *Cana of Galilee*; and, if I were so long practised in bold assertions, as to become, in the end, hardy enough to pronounce what a divine power could not do (contradictions only always excepted) I do verily think my sagacious vanity would rather tempt me to instance the latter case than the former, this being attended with many more inexplicable difficulties than the other.

But I find myself under no necessity of urging and insisting upon this point, since the expression which the Sacred Writer makes use of, in relation to St. Peter's speech, on this occasion, as it implies his speaking in a masterly manner, naturally implies the knowledge of idiom and phraseology; and the information given us of the effects of this miraculous gift of language, namely, the conversion of 3000 in

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one day, implies much more than the known power of oratory in any other instance, under all the advantages of all the knowledge and all the endowments imaginable.

The consideration of this subject naturally suggests a fair occasion of doing justice to the sagacity of those gentlemen of *Port Royal*, who are said to be the authors of that logic called *the Art of Thinking*, in which they observe, that a figured stile (of which the Scriptures set the noblest examples) not only signifies the things themselves, but also those passions and affections which we conceive in meditating and thinking of them.

Their words are these;

“ But since a figured stile not  
“ only signifies the things them-  
“ selves, but also those affections of  
“ the mind which we conceive in  
“ meditating and speaking, we may  
“ judge from thence the use which  
“ we



“ we ought to make of it, and what  
“ are the subjects most proper for it.  
“ Therefore, divine truths not  
“ being simply proposed only to be  
“ known, but much more to be  
“ loved, revered, and adored by  
“ men, without doubt, the noble,  
“ elevated, and figured manner of  
“ elocution, observed by the holy  
“ Fathers, is much better suited to  
“ the subject, than a flat and mea-  
“ gre stile, like that of the schools;  
“ since it not only teaches us the  
“ truths we are to know, but also  
“ endeavours to raise in us those  
“ sentiments of love, reverence, and  
“ affection, which the Fathers had  
“ for those truths inspired by the  
“ Spirit of God, when they wrote;  
“ and which, representing to us the  
“ image of that holy disposition,  
“ must of necessity contribute more  
“ to imprint the like in us.  
I come now, with undisssembled  
confusion and regret, to the last  
point

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point in debate upon this subject, which, I solemnly declare, I know not how to censure or excuse.

When a man of great learning and great abilities advances an opinion apparently improbable and unsupported, I hesitate and am at a stand, not knowing but a man of such powers and penetration may see much clearer and deeper than I can.

But, when an opinion is advanced by such a man, in express, direct opposition to a plain sacred text, I am confounded and astonished.

The learned prelate says, that what was inspired into the Apostles was *the terms of the tongues with grammatical congruity; and that to suppose such kind of inspired knowledge of strange tongues, as includes all the native peculiarities,—is* (says the learned prelate) *as I have said, an ignorant fancy, and repugnant to reason and experience.*

Now

Now Scripture effectually says the direct contrary (and almost literally) to this, in some expressions more strictly expounded than in our English translation, *Acts ii.*

*Ver. 6. Now, when this was noised abroad, the multitude came together, and were confounded, because they heard them, each, every man, speaking in their own proper dialect.*

*Ver. 7. And they were all amazed, and marvelled, saying to one another, Behold, are not all these which speak Galileans?*

*Ver. 8. And how hear we them, each of us, in our proper dialect, (or idiom) wherein we were born?*

And surely this is hearing them speak in the idiom of their own native tongues!

I can neither add inference nor observation but this, that, when I read the learned prelate's assertion, in clear contradiction to the Scripture account of this miracle, I was

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amazed,



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amazed, and can now describe my  
condition, on that occasion, no  
otherwise, than that so strange an  
event naturally incited me to lament  
for myself the vanity of youth, and  
the infirmities of age, and the fallen  
condition of human nature.



**P I N I S**

